

The Treasury of Indian Expressions



TIRTHA, the Treasury of Indian Expressions is a guide to meanings of ordinary words, terms and concepts that reflect the Indian way of life. Words like Samskara, Tithi, Pentecost, Digambara, Mahayana, Talak, Raga, Abhinaya, Maya, Moksha, Takht—even Dahi—which are referred to often but perhaps without their meaning being really clear.

TIRTHA attempts to fill this need through simple explanations meant entirely for the lay person. It is not a scholarly reference book for the academic but certainly interesting reading for anyone who is curious about words in our cultural context and wants quick, easy reference material that will put the reader in touch with India's rich heritage.

TIRTHA is a compilation of over 3,500 entries under 21 chapter heads. With contributions from some of India's top photographers, the visual component is exciting.

An easy-to-read book, well-indexed with relevant cross references that connect words and meanings across chapters, TIRTHA leads the reader through the long and fascinating span of India's history, geography, myth and legend, philosophy, law, art and other areas.

'Tirtha' literally means a holy place, a pilgrimage, a journey with a special purpose. And in a wider sense, the term applies to revered people: parents and teachers. The reader of this book should find it a voyage of pleasant discovery.

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TIRTHA

The Treasury of Indian Expressions





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TIRTHA

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Foreword

TIRTHA is a compendium of words, phrases and terms relating to Indian culture. Culture in its broadest sense, not necessarily restricted to art, drama, music, theatre and dance but covering Indian lifestyle, history, geography, natural phenomena and other such parameters.

The objective of this book is to introduce to the average 'want-to-know-more-about-India' reader those words and concepts that are part of the Indian heritage. Over a period of time some of these expressions have faded from our vocabulary.

TIRTHA is not a book to be read non-stop though one might well do so. It is mainly to look up words encountered in, if I might use a cliché, 'cultured conversation.' The idea is that knowing these words and understanding their significance brings one that much closer to understanding Indian culture.

TIRTHA is not a book or collection of phrases for the scholar who wants to delve deeper into meanings and connotations. The words simply give the background and the meaning and implication of the words, often with convenient cross references. It is also for all those interested in India: travellers, non-resident Indians and foreign nationals who want to know more about our country.

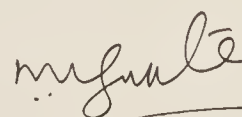
The text is set under various subject heads. It is of course possible that a different treatment could have been used like listing words entirely in alphabetical order like a dictionary or encyclopaedia, but the present arrangement of over 3,500 words was felt to be more reader-friendly. It is lucid, simple, straightforward.

The compendium is based on a large number of reference works that range from simple dictionaries to scholarly works. Yet TIRTHA claims to be neither comprehensive nor complete: is it possible to compress a 5,000 year old civilization into a few thousand words? It is merely a first attempt at putting together a simple dictionary on 'cultural literacy' if I might borrow the term from E.D.Hirsch, who is the editor of *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* published in the U.S.

CMC has done this in the expectation that it will add to the general awareness of India's multi-faceted culture both within and outside India. We look forward to receiving constructive criticism, suggestions on additions, deletions or amendments so that the next edition can be more meaningful. However, size is a major factor that limits us to not more than 4,000 words.

My personal thanks are due to the Project Advisory Board which consisted of eminent people who, without exception, were all turned on by the project. Shri H.Y. Sharada Prasad, Shri J. Veeraraghavan, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Smt. Veena Sikri and Shri Bhaskar Ghose extended their support and provided valuable advice and guidance to the Editorial team of Viji Ghose, Jaya Ramanathan and Renuka Khandekar who have put in unstinted effort to make this book enjoyable, readable, informative and easy to use. And my thanks also to Shri Gopi Gajwani who had to juggle with words and visuals to get a classy product.

I would like to thank my colleagues at CMC who have contributed to it in so many ways. A CD-ROM will be released very soon after the book, so that CMC which works in the field of information technology can present TIRTHA in the electronic media as well.



DR . P.P. GUPTA
Chairman and Managing Director
CMCLtd.

About TIRTHA ...

It was an idea that had been discussed many times: a book that brought our rich heritage virtually to the doorstep of the modern Indian, particularly the youngster; with terms and concepts that covered the land, the people, their customs and traditions. For though we are jingoistically proud of our 5000 year old culture, we are on unfamiliar ground when asked the significance of certain things about our country, be they rituals or land forms or even just the various calendars that different communities follow.

Parents, themselves somewhat alienated from the intrinsic 'culture' (in the broadest terms) of India, have felt a sense of disquiet at not being able to communicate the quintessential India to their children. What was needed, to start with, was a quick, easy handbook, a ready reckoner.

So, in June 1991, when the idea of the book was broached, we enthusiastically agreed to conceptualize and compile TIRTHA. But we had no idea what we had taken on. A book like TIRTHA about a country like India was a daunting, near impossible task given the time frame of just one year for the entire project. This included research, writing, visuals and printing!

More than anything else, it was the conceptualising of the book that took the most time. Nothing quite like what we had in mind existed in the market. Books on India veered wildly from travel guides to encyclopedias of myth, legend and history in alphabetical order. What we wanted was more than just the traditional concepts of 'culture'. We proposed to give readers a sort of handbook on the vibrant, complex, often mysterious and splendid experience of life in India.

When a land rejoices in a 5,000 year span of cultural continuity, with its turbulent history, its many languages and religions it would be presumptuous to think that all of the ambience of Indian life could be wrapped up in one volume of 300 odd pages. But a beginning had to be made and TIRTHA is but the first offering.

The book has been divided broadly into 21 chapters. Words selected are not exhaustive but merely representative of the subject. For example, the chapter 'Food' simply gives you a taste of the feast lying undiscovered in nooks and crannies of the country. It is for the reader to undertake a further journey of exploration. And so it is with other chapters.

TIRTHA has something for everyone. For the browser it offers leisurely exploration as she/he finds the cross currents that flow through the various chapters and builds bridges between history and art and holy places or any of the other chapters. It is the overlapping of subjects that is intriguing and fascinating for it becomes difficult to say, for example, where Religion ends and Philosophy begins.

The fact finder or the quizzier simply looks up the exhaustive index and sees the word-links immediately. For example, Mahabalipuram appears under Archaeology/ Architecture, Holy Places and Visual Arts. For more information, the reader looks up other entries under the subject in question.

How to use the book

The book, by and large goes in alphabetical order from ADORNMENT to VISUAL ARTS. Even within the chapters the entries are listed in alphabetical order. However there are some exceptions. Chapters like Archaeology and Architecture and History have followed a chronological pattern. Within religion, we have maintained the accepted order. In Hinduism, for example, the divine trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with their consorts retains the accepted order instead of the alphabetical sequence Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. The idea is that the reader immediately makes logical connections which would have taken longer otherwise.

A word about spelling. Indian names are difficult to standardize in English because of regional variations in pronunciation and the differing usage adopted by individuals. Thus Purnima is as current as Poornima and Vijayanagar as valid as Vijayanagara. As far as possible we have tried to choose what seems closest phonetically, for example, Shiva instead of Siva, or Ashoka rather than Asoka.

We would like to thank all those who were closely associated with Project TIRTHA who cheerfully and willingly extended cooperation, much beyond the call of duty. Otherwise it would simply not have been possible to bring out a book like this within a year!

As for us, TIRTHA has been more than the pilgrimage it stands for. In the wider concept of the word, it has been a voyage of discovery reinforcing our respect for our tradition and heritage that is uniquely Indian. We hope you find it equally absorbing.

VIJAYA GHOSE: *Editor*

JAYA RAMANATHAN: *Assistant Editor*

RENUKA KHANDEKAR: *Assistant Editor*

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ADORNMENT

Shringara

India's rich sartorial past rustled with pure silk, crisp cotton, soft wool, elegantly folded and draped. Men and women wore stunning jewellery of exquisite design. Herbal cosmetics included kohl for the eyes, paan for red lips, flowers and sandalwood for perfume

COSMETICS

Traditional Indian cosmetics made extensive use of natural herbs, fruits, leaves, flowers and kitchen ingredients. Today, there is a great revival in herbal and natural cosmetics. Based on 'natural' substances rather than chemical, these modern-day products are attractively packaged and sold.

ALTA

A red liquid obtained by blending slaked lime and turmeric. Women of Bengal, UP, Bihar, Orissa and other eastern states have their feet edged with alta on auspicious occasions. For brides it is a most essential adornment. Alta is known as mahawar in UP.

ANGARAGA

A cosmetic cream. Fragrant and aromatic creams in ancient India used to be made of substances like turmeric, sandal paste, camphor and herbs. Different seasons had different creams prescribed to suppress body odours. *Gandhasara*, a treatise on the use of cosmetics, mentions six methods of making these unguents (creams). Many homes still use turmeric, sandal, rose leaves and ground lentils for face masks and scrubs, depilatories and seasonal skin foods.

ANJAN

Kajal, surma or kohl for lining the eyes. The Ayurvedic work *Sushruta Samhita* (See Science) elaborates on the making of anjan. A lot of romance is attached to the act of a girl applying the dark paste to her eyes. At Khajuraho (See Archaeology/Architecture, Holy Places: Temples) a beautiful sculpture shows a girl applying anjan. In the Braj region (Krishna's land) there is a place called Anjanokh where Krishna is believed to have adorned Radha's eyes with anjan. This episode is enacted during Vana Yatra (See Festivals), an annual forest festival.

ATTAR

Itr. Oil or extract of roses, said to be created by the Mughal empress Nur Jehan. Extracts are also made of sandalwood, vetiver (khus) and even the elusive smell of newly wet earth is simulated.

BESAN

Gram flour, used as a face scrub and as an alternative to soap for infants. The pure flour (specially ground) does not irritate

the tender skin but at the same time the mild abrasive action helps remove dry scales.

In harsh, northern winters where oil massages are important to keep the skin from going dry, the best way to remove the oil is to use besan as it keeps the skin soft and smooth.

CHANDAN

Sandalwood powder. It has been used for centuries and is most auspicious in the abhisheka (anointing) of idols particularly Vishnu and Krishna (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts). Apart from its use in the original powder and paste form, today a number of marketed cosmetics have sandalwood as a base.

DAHI

Curd or curdled milk, mixed with a few spoons of gram flour is used to make a face mask. Curd is also added to henna before it is applied to the hair as a conditioner.

GOROCHANA

A yellow pigment dye used in the making of tilak (the red dot on the forehead) and textiles. Turmeric or haldi in its purest form is used with chuna (slaked lime) to make kumkum, the auspicious red powder used in pujas, worn on the forehead and on the hair parting, as a symbol of marriage.

HALDI

Turmeric powder has an auspicious significance for Hindu married women, especially in southern India. Women apply the freshly ground turmeric root (resembling ginger) on their face before a bath. Turmeric is said to be both an antiseptic and a depilatory.

KAJAL

Eye liner; the purest kajal is made at home, especially for new-born babies. A small lamp is lit with castor oil and a small cotton wick. The soot is collected on a spatula (either steel or silver). This soot is mixed in a drop of castor oil or pure ghee (clarified butter) and applied to the eyes.

KUMKUM

Used by women to adorn their foreheads and applied to the parting in the hair as a symbol of marriage. The purest kumkum is made by mixing slaked lime and turmeric and passing through a fine sieve. Sindoor, also used similarly, is made from red lead with powdered mica added for a glistening effect.

MEHNDI

Henna has been used for centuries by women to make designs on their palms and the feet. Also used as a hair dye by both men and women. The berries used to be ground and the paste applied for colour. But today

henna is widely available in powder form. For designs, the powder is mixed in water, filled into a cone and squeezed out through a tiny hole.

SAMBRANI

A fragrant resin (called loban in the north) which gives off an aromatic smoke when burnt on a few pieces of coal. In south India little babies are dried off before smoking sambrani after a bath. Women too, after they have washed their hair, let the sambrani smoke waft through the loose strands both for its drying effect as well as for its fragrance.

SHIKAKAI

Soap nut, powdered with dried amla or emblic myrobalan, and methi (fenugreek) and used as a shampoo. The amla has a dyeing effect while the methi keeps it soft. Shikakai is a most effective grease remover (better than any detergent) and it is the only thing to use for the ritual south Indian oil bath.



Woman lining her eyes (Khajuraho sculpture)



COSTUMES (Ancient)

The clothes that people in India wear are varied, vibrant and colourful. Geography, climate, racial and social status are all factors that have had a bearing on the kind of garment worn. A single costume known by the same name has various styles of draping. The costumes covered here extend from the post Vedic period (600-323 BC) to the Gupta period (early 4th to 8th century AD). While it has not been possible to describe everything, this is a quick glimpse of some of the styles of garments. For all periods mentioned in brackets, such as (Gupta), see relevant dynasty in History.

ANTARIA

A piece of cloth worn on the lower part of the body similar to the present day dhoti. In the Mauryan-Sunga period (321-72 BC) women wore it of fine cotton, calf length, with fluted ends in front, draped kaccha style (between the legs). The men wore it the same length except that the front had a pleated apron. In the Satavahana period (100 BC-250 AD. See History: Dynasties) the antaria became transparent, still worn kaccha style with thick pleats in front. The king wore his antaria down to his ankles with visible pleats in front. In the Kushan period (130 BC-185 AD) the antaria was worn extremely short. The Yakshi (female doorkeeper) draped it like a lehnga (long skirt). In certain parts of the country the trend of passing one end of the antaria like a sari across the left shoulder had already set in.

CHOLAKA

A kind of choli with an apron front and a V neck (Gupta) worn by maids-in-waiting.

CHOLI

A short blouse of diaphanous material (Gupta). The choli has been evolving with different materials, cuts and styles right up to the present day.

CHUGHA

A long coat which comes below the length of the tunic and worn open at the front centre, with a decorative braid at the front and long, gathered-up sleeves. It is reminiscent of the garment worn by King Kanishka (Kushan).

GAJAJIN

Bark strip garments worn by ascetics (Gupta).

GHAGRI

A calf-length, gathered skirt, with a drawn cord at the waist (Satavahana).

KANCHUKA

Mid-length tunic with a round neck and short magyar-type sleeves worn by the king while hunting (Satavahana).

KANTOPA

A cap worn by attendants (Satavahana) with flaps covering the ears with an ovaloid headcrest attached to it.

KATISUTRA

The string used to support the antaria; it is normally invisible since it is covered by a girdle or a hip chain (Gupta).

KAYABANDH

An embroidered sash either narrow or broad, worn round the waist. This was either wound once like a belt (Mauryan-Sunga) or worn loosely at the hips and tied at the right with the ends left loose (Satavahana).

MAULI

A turban in which the long hair and cloth are twisted together, wound around the head and made into a top knot in front; the cloth then continues to be wound around the head and fixed with a separate band (Mauryan-Sunga).

PALLA

A draped garment, very much like the sari (Kushan).

QUABA

A calf length striped coat with pointed collar and braid on the upper arms; the coat had floating ties at the back. It was worn by horsemen (Gupta).

USHNISA

A turban cloth wound with the hair and twisted into a top knot. The rest of the cloth is then wound around the head. Worn by the king while hunting (Satavahana). The soldiers tied it differently.

UTTARASANGA

The upper garment worn by Buddhists in Vaikaksha (straps crossed at the chest) style.

UTTARIYA

Printed cotton material worn crosswise on the head. The Yakshis wore a second uttariya draped across the back and over both arms. The Yakshas wore it in upavita fashion, across the chest and over the left shoulder (Mauryan-Sunga). In the Satava-



A palla drape

hana period the uttariya was of heavy material with elaborate borders, worn straight or cross-wise over the head and then thrown back over the shoulders. In the Kushan period it was worn casually over the shoulders.

YAJNOPAVITA

A princely costume accessory, a sacred thread worn over the left shoulder. The thread, passing under the right arm is strung with amulets like those seen on Bodhisattvas (See Religion: Buddhism) of Kushan period.



COSTUMES (Contemporary)

ACHKAN

A high-collared coat similar to the sherwani, generally popular in northern India. The achkan (gala bandh or closed coat) along with the churidar was identified by India's first prime minister, Pandit Nehru, as the formal dress for representatives of India.

ANCHAL

The part of the sari that falls over the left shoulder or is draped over the right shoulder and falls in front. The latter style of sari draping is known as 'seedha pallu' and is common in Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and UP. Also called pallu.

ANGAVASTRA

A shoulder wrap or scarf worn in lieu of or with an upper garment. Many of the Hindu rituals require the men not to wear stitched garments (especially if they wear the sacred thread). In this case the angavastra is used as a wrap. Many temples in Kerala forbid entry to men wearing stitched clothes, because of old rules of ritual purity.

ANGIA

A piece of cloth styled like a bodice and tied at the back with strings. Angia is also another word for blouse.

ANGOCHA

A rough towel (often red and white checked), made of thin cotton material which is also used by men as a shoulder wrap. Also called gamcha.

ASH KOT

A Nepalese waistcoat.

BANDI

A double-breasted, waist-length jacket with the upper flaps fastened at the left side. It is worn by men in Gujarat, and is also called badana.

BANDIA-ANGARKHA

A jacket worn by Rajasthani men, which closely fits the chest and then extends up to the waist in loose vertical gathers; the narrow sleeves, being longer than the arms, have to be adjusted at the wrists, resulting in bangle-like gathers at the forearm.

BANIAN

A vest of hosiery material for men. Also called ganji.

BARABANDI

A traditional upper garment, once popular with the men of Maharashtra. It had six pairs of strings or tapes, (thus, bara or

twelve), to fasten the upper flap on the left side.

BASKAT

A waistcoat.

BILLAGOCHI

A 9-yard sari of Andhra Pradesh with a portion of it drawn up between the legs and tucked in behind, at the waist.

BUSHAHRI

A cap of Himachal Pradesh. The crown of the cap is usually blue, green or red. Flowers are tucked into the cap band during festive occasions. Also called Kinnauri.

CHADAR

Lit. a sheet. A long piece of cloth used as an upper garment, especially in the northern parts, in the winter months. Also known as chadra or chadru (where the sheet is also used as a lower garment).

CHADDI

A stitched undergarment worn like a pyjama, except that it is very short and ends much above the knees. Called kachcha in Punjab.

CHALLI

A long woollen coat of Ladakh. The left flap overlaps the right one and is fastened on the right side. A girdle of white cotton is tied round the waist in a knot with its ends hanging. The women wear a slight variation of the challi.

CHAMBU-THURI

A Lepcha (an ethnic group of Sikkim) woollen cap sometimes with a red pom pom on top (See People: Tribes).

CHANIYO

A 5 m ankle-length skirt full of pleats, extremely popular in Gujarat and Rajasthan especially among rural women; Called ghagri, ghagro, ghagra, lehnga or pavadai in south India.

CHANTIA

The chantia (known as orhni in the north) is worn by the Lambadis, a nomadic tribe of Andhra Pradesh. It is usually red and heavily embroidered and carelessly tossed over a tattooed back, with the end tucked into the long skirt.

CHAULI

A shawl worn by the men of Himachal Pradesh. Its two ends are fastened together near the breast with a silver hook.

CHHUBA

A long cloak worn by the men of Himachal Pradesh.

CHIRA

The sari worn by women in Andhra Pradesh.

CHOLA

A loose gown with many folds.

CHOLI

A fitting blouse worn by women, a part of the sari ensemble (See Costumes (Ancient) – Choli).

CHORNO

Loose trousers or churidars worn by men in Gujarat.

CHUNAN

The pleats of the sari.

CHUNARI

A long scarf. Also known as chunni, dupatta, lungro, orhni (Rajasthan) – a shoulder-cum-head scarf. Chunari is also a term for 'knot dyeing' (See Visual Arts: Design – Textiles).

DAKMANDA

The flowered and colourful dress of the Garo women. They come in all colours and are locally woven, though blue and maroon are the popular colours. Dakmandas are distinguishable from other women's garments as there is a fixed design at both ends of the cloth.

DAKSARIA

A cheaper version of the Dakmanda. Though the Dakmanda motif is woven at both ends, no flower designs are used. This dress is commonly used by Garo women while at home.

DAVANI

A half sari of Tamil Nadu. Usually 3 m in length, it is worn with a long skirt (pavadai) and a blouse. One half of the davani is pleated on the left side and tucked into the skirt while the rest goes around like a sari. Also called melak.

DHATHU

A head scarf knotted at the back; worn by women in Himachal Pradesh.

DHOOTI/DHOTI

Fine cotton material, 4 to 5 m, draped by men in most of the northern, central and eastern states. The Gujarati dhutiya has a narrow border on both sides. The tuck at the back is on the right side (kachchodi) and the portion for the frontal pleats (patli) comes from the left. The pleats in front are not allowed to dangle loosely in front but are tucked in over the navel. The elegant Bengali dhooti is worn with pleats in front (koncha) and rear pleats (kacha, mal-koncha). The koncha formed from the surplus portion coming from the right is kept

dangling. In Orissa the draping style is similar with the dangling pleats called phera. Dhotar (Maharashtra), dhotara (Karnataka). In Uttar Pradesh the sari without a border is also called dhoti (See Panchagachcham).

DHORU

Colourful blanket used as a wrap in Himachal Pradesh.

Digra – a brooch to fasten the Dhoru, usually large and made of silver, copper or brass.

DOVE

Plume. Mainly used by Garo dancers. Feathers of birds commonly found in Garo Hills (Meghalaya) are tied together into a bunch and stuck into the hair.

DORA

Lit. rope. A black woollen rope of great length wrapped tightly round the waist over the chola (loose gown). Worn by both men and women in Himachal Pradesh.

DUMBON

Traditional dress of the Lepcha women of Sikkim. Resembling the sari, it covers the body from shoulder to ankles and is kept in place with pins at the shoulders.

GANDHICAP

A white khadi (hand spun and woven) cap introduced by Mahatma Gandhi during the struggle for Independence. The cap along with minimum apparel, all made of hand woven material, was symbolic of the Swadeshi (nationalist) movement. Many national leaders wear the cap even today. This white cap is commonly worn by men in rural Maharashtra.

GARARA

A popular women's garment from northern India which falls in flounces like the ghagra (wide, full-length skirt) but it is bifurcated in the middle.

GOREY

A square scarf worn by Lepcha women over the head, knotted at the back.

GYADO

A pair of loose cotton pyjamas reaching below the knees, worn by Lepcha men of Sikkim.

IKING

The traditional wear of the Garo women. It is a piece of thick, black cloth, woven at home and measuring about two feet in length and in breadth. The village women wear them to this day though by and large it is confined to the older generation.

JAINSEM

Part of the traditional dress of the women of Meghalaya. It comprises 4 m of colourful silk material, the middle part of which is folded and rests like a bag at the back. The two free ends part below the left and right arms, drawn up crosswise to be tied over the right and left shoulders respectively.

It is also the traditional dress of Khasi women. It consists of two silk pieces used as the outer garment, and pinned on to the shoulders.

JAINSPONG

A silk turban worn by Khasi male dancers.

JAJA

A waistcoat worn by Bhutia (an ethnic group of Sikkim) men. This, together with the thurishambu, a cap with a mound of tiny corals knitted together in the middle; shosti, hand sewn leather and velvet shoes; and a full-sleeved shirt with collar (yentak) worn under a full sleeved dress, fo-kho; completes the traditional dress.

JAMA

A Mughal upper garment tied at the left side. It also denotes a knee-length coat tied at the waist.

JUBBA

A collarless, long-sleeved, loose garment (kurta) worn by men in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Jibba in Tamil Nadu, Panjabi in Bengal.

JURKHI

A woollen achkan (high-collared coat) worn by men in Himachal Pradesh.

KABJA

A sleeveless jacket worn by the working and agricultural class of men in Maharashtra. In lieu of this the kopri, a tunic with half sleeves is worn.

KACHA

Rear pleats of the dhooti in Bengal. Also called malkoncha.

Kachchadi – the back tuck of the dhootiyu in Gujarat.

KAMEEZ

Knee-length upper garment, originally worn by women of Punjab and northern India but in the past two decades it has become a most fashionable alternative to the sari in all parts of the country. It is worn over either churidars (tight pyjamas) or salwars (loosely fashioned pyjamas) Kameez is also a word for the man's conventional shirt.

KANCHALI

A half-sleeved tight bodice for women fastened with strings at the back.

KANDHELA

Another word for anchal or pallu, the portion of the sari that falls over the left shoulder.

KOMANAM

Loin cloth or langoti in Tamil Nadu. Konam in Kerala.

KONCHA

The front pleats of a dhooti in Bengal; Kosavu-frontal pleats of a sari in Tamil Nadu. Kuchulu – front pleats of a sari in Andhra Pradesh.

KUNIL

The wide, bell-shaped shirt worn by Manipuri dancers. (See Performing Arts: Dance)

KUPPASA

Blouse in Karnataka.

KURTA

A collarless, loose garment of cotton, silk or synthetic material worn by both men and women over the salwar, churidar, dhoti or trousers.

KUTIP

Headband. Before the advent of Christianity among the Garos, the men used to grow long hair and a piece of long cloth, always blue in colour was used to tie up the hair.

LENGHA

Lengha – pyjamas (Maharashtra), worn by young men.

LENGTI

Loincloth (also called langoti). Rural men often wear nothing more than a loin cloth.

LOONGDA

Worn by the women of the Ahir (tribal) community of Madhya Pradesh. It is a short sari draped tightly above the knee and across the bosom.

LUGADI

Sari in Maharashtra. Selai, pudavai (Tamil Nadu), seere (Karnataka), chira (Andhra Pradesh).

LUNGI

A sheet-like drape for men, tied at the waist, that falls short of the ankles. Often found in bright colours and prints.

MADISAR

A 9-yard sari worn by the traditional Brahmin women of Tamil Nadu. For Shaiva women, the draping is elaborate with both



Resplendent in Pag

front and rear tucks and the end of the sari is taken over the right shoulder (not left as in the normal wear) brought to the front and one end is tucked in. Vaishnava women drape it with a slight difference and the sari pallu goes over the left shoulder. Girls of the community wear the madisar for the first time at their marriage and thereafter on all auspicious occasions.

MO-KHO

The female equivalent of the fo-kho, a Bhutia (Sikkim) woman's sleeveless garment.

MUNDU

A spotless white lungi (see Lengti), sometimes of shorter length, worn by both men and women of Kerala.

Paru Mundu – a similar cloth used to cover the upper half.

OTTAVESHTI

The veshti is a popular men's drape in Tamil Nadu. Unlike the dhoti, there is no tuck to the veshti; it is wrapped around the waist like a lungi. Usually white in colour with a narrow border, the veshti is either ottavesh-ti (single veshti) or rattavesh-ti (of thinner material, folded in two).

PAG

The elaborate turban or headgear worn by men in Rajasthan. The fine material is of 16 to 23 metres and the draping is reminiscent of Rajput nobility. Pacharanga-pagdi (five-coloured headgear) worn slightly aslant. Also called pagra or pecha.

PANCHAGACHCHAM

Pronounced 'pancha gachcham,' a dhoti or veshti with five (pancha) tucks in Tamil Nadu. Usually worn by orthodox Brahmin men on auspicious occasions. It becomes 'trichcham' when it has three tucks.

PARAHAN

Worn by Santhal women (tribal group of Bihar). It is a short piece of cloth wrapped round the waist reaching just below the knee. Similar to the Ahir loongda (See Loongda). The panchi (another piece of cloth) is used to cover the torso. Pardhanian – the parahan worn by Gond (tribal sect) men in Madhya Pradesh.

PATLI

The frontal pleats of the Gujarati dhotiyu or sari. Patali – the frontal pallu of the Gujarati sari. The women of Gujarat tuck this sari in front and at the back and the rest is brought forward over the right shoulder, pleated and then tucked in at the left to resemble an open fan in front. This style of sari is similar to the sari worn by women of MP, UP and Bihar (See Anchal).

PENI

A petticoat worn by the Mikir (a tribal group of Assam) women, fastened by an ornamental girdle of old silver coins. The upper part is covered by a cloth known as pekok.

PHANEK

The main garment of Manipur women. It is a sheet of cloth folded high round the body

to cover the bosom. It reaches down to the ankles.

PERAN

A part of the ensemble of Kashmiri men and women. The pheran is a long loose woollen ankle-length coat for men and women. Today it has been modified to kurta length for women and is worn over the salwar.

POOTHUKULI

A cocoon-like garment worn by the Toda (tribal community of Tamil Nadu) men and women. It is of thick, white material with one or two vertical stripes of blue, red or black woven into it.

RAVIKA

The blouse worn with a sari choli in Andhra Pradesh.

Ravikkai – Tamil Nadu.

RI-SHA

The women of Tripura wear the ri-sha (ri-cloth, sha-small) as a bosom garment.

RIHA

A 3 1/2 m long scarf with tassels, tied by married women of Assam round their waists.

RUMAL

In Maharashtra and Karnataka a head dress for men made with freshly folded cloth shaped like a handkerchief.

SADRA

A half-sleeved shirt worn by the men of Maharashtra over the dhoti. Also the fine vest-like garment worn by Parsis, sadro, as one of the prerequisites of their faith (See Religion: Zoroastrianism).

SAFA

A somewhat voluminous turban (cloth headwear) used in northern India. Safas are specially worn by the close kinsmen of the bride and groom during the wedding. Also called safo.

SHERWANI

Male upper garment, buttoned tightly from the neck to the waist from where it drops loosely to the knees. It is used mostly in the north and was introduced to India by the Muslim invaders.

SUTHAN

Tight pyjamas worn by Dogri women of Jammu along with the kameez and dupatta.

TORTHU

A kind of towel, worn as a shoulder wrap by men in Kerala.



Ancient hairstyle with ornaments

HAIR STYLES

JATA MUKUTA

Matted hair is taken in a heap high up over the head to form a cone shape. Five jatas or braids of hair are tied into three-inch knots; the rest are bound or left hanging on the sides. Shiva (See Religion: Hinduism) is normally visualised with this jata mukuta hairstyle.

KABARI BANDHA

A simple hairstyle where the hair is twisted into a chignon or a bun.

KESAPASA

A hairstyle in which the hair is looped close to the head in an elaborate knot; used to describe Krishna's locks in the eulogistic *Rasakrida*.

ORNAMENTS/AABHUŠHAN

A number of jewelled accessories are used to adorn the hair. Beginning with the kunjalam of south India (parandi in the north) which is used to braid the hair, there are ornate combs and jooda (bun) pins, often with little bells on them.



Kantha or addigay

JEWELLERY

ANGULIA

Lit: for the finger (anguli), a ring.
Also called anguliyaka, anguthi.
Ratnangulia – ring studded with precious stones.

AKSHAMALA

A rosary of beads. There are two types of akshamalās – rudraksha and kamalaksha. The Hindu akshamala has 50 beads corresponding to 50 letters of the alphabet beginning with 'a' and ending with 'ksha'. The Buddhist akshamala has 108 beads. Generally the gods Brahma, Shiva and Saraswati are depicted with the rosary in their hands but it is not unusual to find it in the hands of other deities as well.

Also a name for Arundhati (See Sages and Saints).

ARSI

A ring for the thumb, set with a mirror.

BINA

A star-shaped ornament worn on the forehead, fastened to the hair by a hook or a chain.

Also called sitara.

BULAKU

Bulaku in Tamil and Telugu; a gold ornament worn in the cartilage of the nose, hanging to the lips. Other nose ornaments are: keel – nosepin of gold (UP) called mukkuthi in Tamil.

Nakchabi – nose pin worn by women in Bengal, studded with glass or stone.

Nath or nathia, a big nose ring generally worn at the time of marriage by women of northern and certain parts of eastern India.

Nothia in Bihar.

CHAULARI

A necklace in four strands.

Paklari – a necklace in five strands.

Satlari – seven strand necklace.

Tilari – three stringed necklace.

CHUDAMANI

An ornament for the hair shaped like a lotus. The petals are studded with pearls and precious stones.

DEHRI

Earrings shaped like discs.

DHAMMILIA

An elaborate hair style with flowers, pearls and jewels.

GHUNGROO

An anklet with small bells. The heavier ones with rows of bells are worn by dancers.



Keyura or angada

Also payal, nupur, kara (simple bangle type anklet), mani nupura (anklets of jewelled beads), manjira (hollow anklets which make a tinkling sound in movement), sankla a thick chain anklet, tulakoti (heavy anklets with the two ends enlarged at meeting point).

GURNAKUNTALA

A hairdo for males where the shoulder length hair is curled and left loose. At times this may be fastened with a headband or a string of pearls.

HARAVASTI

From 'hara' – necklace; made of large pearls.

HASTI

Lit: elephant tusks.
Bangles of ivory.

HEMA SUTRA

A gold chain for the neck with precious stones studded in the centre.

HEMAVAIKAKSHA

Two long wreaths of either flowers or pearls worn round the chest by women.

HIRANYA

Gold.

Also called suvarna (good colour), swarna, sona.

Hiranyasraj – gold garlands.

JIMIKI

Long earrings with short tassels of gold or pearls or other beads at the end. A popular earring of Tamil Nadu. In north India it is called jhumka or jhumki.

KAKSHA

Red seeds used for making ornaments, also called manjari.

KAKSHYA BANDHA

A heavy ornament made of chains (of gold, silver or precious stones) embellished with pendants and worn aslant at the hip.

KALABAKU

A cummerbund (waist chain) of many strings. Also called kayabandh.

Vethaka – simple sash cummerbund.

KANAKA KAMALA

Earring designed to resemble a full-blown lotus and set with rubies; often seen in south India.

KANCHALA

Elaborate pendant earrings.

KANCHIS

Hip girdle with beads.

KANTHA

A short necklace, broad and flat, worn close to the neck (addigay – Tamil).

KARANDA-MUKUTA

Lit: bowl shaped crown. It is a small crown generally worn by subordinate gods and goddesses.

KARNIKA

Earring. Karnphul – earring shaped like a flower.

KAVACHA

A protective cover for the body, a kind of armour. Karna, in *Mahabharata*, (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics) was endowed with a special kavacha which made him invincible. He was tricked by Indra into giving up his kavacha along with other ornaments and was thus left completely vulnerable.

KEYURA

A flat ornament worn on the arm just over the biceps.

Also called baju bahu, angada (shaped like a coiled snake).

KINKINI

A phonetic word for the tiny anklet with little bells worn by children.

KIRITA

A crown or tiara.

Also called tiritu, mukuta, kreedam (Tamil).

KIRITA-MUKUTA

A conical crown with an ornamental top carrying a central pointed knob. It is covered with jewelled discs on all sides and has jewelled bands on the top and bottom. The crown is worn exclusively by Vishnu.

KUNDALA

Ornament for the ear usually ring shaped. Karna of *Mahabharata* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics) was made to part with his kundalas, the source of his invincibility (See kavacha). Sarpa-kundala – an ornament for the ear, shaped like a snake.

LAMBANAM

A long necklace.

Also called mala, maalai (south India).

MAKARIKA

An ornament for the hair shaped like a fish or a crocodile.

MANGAMALAI

A necklace of south India with a number of little pendants shaped like mangoes (from manga – mango).

MAULI MANI

An elaborately jewelled clasp for the turban (mauli).



Ghungroo adorning a dancer's feet.

MEKHALA

A girdle or a hip belt. Also called muraja, rasana.

MINCHI

Silver ring worn on the second toe of each foot by women in Kerala. Metti – in Tamil, bichhua in Uttar Pradesh. Peeli – toe ring with diamond shaped plates and ornamental work, worn on the third toe.

MUKTAJALA

A net(jala) of pearls(mukta) worn over the chignon.

Muktavali – necklace of a single strand of pearls.

Muktayajnopavita – sacred thread made only with pearls.

Suddha-ekavali – a pearl necklace with a gem in the centre.

Thara – a single strand of big pearls.

NISHKA

Necklace of coins. In south India a popular version is the Lakshmi mala, made up of coins which have an imprint of the goddess.

OPASA

Fillet for the hair.

PADAPATRA

A decorative garter for the thigh.

PARIHASTA

Bracelet.

Also called kangan, valaya.

PATTA BANDHA

Ornamental gold strip for holding the turban in position.

PATTIKA

Elaborately embroidered ribbon used as a cummerbund.

PHALAKA

Gems shaped like slabs.

Phalaka hara – necklace studded with slabs of gems.

Phalaka valaya – bracelet with phalaka.

PRATIDHI

A breastband.

RATNA

Precious stones.

Ratnajali – A braided net set with pearls worn around the chignon by women.

Ratnapariksha – The art of appreciation of precious gems.

SRAJA

A garland of flowers.

Also called pushpamala, phoolmala.

SRINGA

A crown made of horn.

STUPA

Lit: A cone-shaped structure (See Religion: Buddhism).

An ornamental cap shaped like a cone for men.

TALAPATRA

Earrings made from a small strip of palm leaf rolled and inserted into the lobe.

TIRAZ BAND

Ornamental braid decorating the upper part of the sleeve.

VIBHUSHANA

An elaborate necklace of looped strings of pearls and gems.



ARCHAEOLOGY/ARCHITECTURE

Puratatva/Vastushilpa

As early as 3000 BC,
the great river civilization of the Indus Valley
boasted of well-laid streets,
water systems and granaries.
Building in India has since been a dynamic process,
with a rich mixture of influences from
China, Persia and Europe

The earliest religious monuments were the Buddhist stupas that go back to 230 BC-500 AD, the Sanchi stupa being the oldest. The ancient Jains also left their mark all over the country. Abu, Sittanavasal, Ellora and many other structures are a reflection of the religion. And Hindu temples, profusely carved, were truly a celebration of life. The Mughals brought their fine arches, perfect domes and filigree in marble culminating in the perfection of the Taj Mahal at Agra – a marvel in stone. In India, the architectural tradition is a living, vital art form.

ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

ALANKARA MANDAPA
Hall for decoration of deity.

AMALAKA
Lit. the fruit of the myrobalan (See Nature: Herbs). The fluted cushion-shaped structure atop a north Indian temple. Also called shikhara or spire.

ANDA
Hemispherical portion of the stupa.

ANTARALA
Vestibule; ante-chamber to a shrine or cell.

APSARAS
Temple sculptures of celestial, dancing nymphs.

ARDHAMANDAPA
Small hall connecting the shrine and the large pillared hall (See Mandapa).

ASHTADIKAPALA
Guardians of eight quarters (See Religion: Buddhism – Dikpala).

BHOGAMANDAPA
Refectory of an Orissan temple.

BHUMUKHAM
Entrance hall.

CHAITYA
Sanctuary in the form of an apsidal hall (See Religion: Buddhism).

CHAITYA GRIHA
Shrine.

CHAMARA OR CHAURI
Fly-whisk; chowrie.

CHITASABHA
Dance hall of Nataraja (See Religion: Hinduism – Shiva).

DABRASABHA
Miniature temple hall.

DAGOBA
Stupa enshrining relics.

DEUL
In Bengal and Orissa, generic name for temple as a whole; also signifies the sanctuary and its tower (vimana).

DEVAKOSTHA
Niche to house an image of a deity.

DHVAJASTAMBHA
Emblem-crowned pillar in front of a temple.

DWARAPALAKA
Doorkeeper.

EKAMUKHALINGA
Shivalinga with a single face of Shiva carved on it (See Religion: Hinduism)

GARBAGRIHA
Inner shrine; the most sacred part of a temple.

GOPURAM (GOPURA)
Imposing towers to temples in south India.

HARMIKA
Box-shaped structure on top of a stupa in which the shape of the symbolic umbrella is set.

JAGAMOHAN
Audience hall or ante-room preceding the sanctuary of an Orissan temple.

KALYANAMANDAPA
Pillared hall for the festival of the marriage of a deity.

KIRTISTAMBHA
'Pillar of glory'; free-standing pillar in front of a temple.

MAHAMANDAPA
Large enclosed hall in front of main shrine; also transepts.

MAKARATORANA
Gateway decorated with makara (crocodile-like mythical animal).

MANDAPA
Porch or pillared hall.

MIHRAB
Alcove in a mosque oriented towards Mecca.

MINAR
Turret (See Qutub Minar).

MITHUNA
Sensuous, erotic figures adorning temples (See Cosmos: Astrology – Rasis).

MUKHAMANDAPA
Narrow hall connecting the ardha mandapa or mandapa with shrine.

MULAMANJARI
Main shikhara on top when subsidiary miniature shikharas, in a cluster below, make up the deol or temple.

MULASTHANA
Sanctum sanctorum.

NANDI
The bull.

NARATHARA
Moulding on the base of a temple.

NASI
Frontal projection of a vimana (See Vimana).

NAYIKA
A carved surasundari (celestial beauty, nymph).

PANCHARATNA
Temple composed of five shrines, four at the corners around the central one.

PRADAKSHINA PRAKARA
Court for clock-wise perambulation.

PRAKARA
Outer wall of a temple court.

RATHAS
Chariots.

SALABHANJIKAS
Brackets of women's figures with trees; used to support the inner chambers of the temple.

SANGHARAMA
Buddhist monastery.

SHIKHARA
The topmost tower.

STUPA
Hemispherical funerary mound built over the remains of distinguished persons (See Religion: Buddhism).

SURASUNDARI
A dancing apsara.

TORANA
Gateway. Also doorway decor.

URUSHRINGA
Lesser towers around the main shikhara (See Shikhara) or spire.

VIHARA
Buddhist monastery.

VIMANA
Small square cell or shrine near the top of a shrine.



Ajanta caves

CHRONOLOGY

5th-4th Century BC

NALANDA

Nalanda, about 80 km south-east of Patna in Bihar, is associated with Buddha in one of his previous births; also with emperor Ashoka and philosophers Nagarjuna, Asanga and Vasubandhu. Buddha's disciple Sariputra was born here.

By the 4th century Nalanda had become a great seat of learning, particularly of the Mahayana doctrine of Buddhism. Excavations have revealed one main temple and three small temples. To the east of these temples, there are eight monasteries in the form of a quadrangle with a number of cloistered cells. Buddhist and Brahmanic images were recovered during excavation (See Religion: Buddhism).

3rd Century BC

BARABAR

The Barabar caves situated 25 km from Gaya in Bihar seem to be made of wood, but in fact are carved out of solid stone.

The planning and architecture of the Barabar caves – the most important being the Lomas Rishi caves – represent a stage in the evolution of chaitya architecture. Each consists of two apartments, a rectangular one at the outer end with the entrance separated from it by a solid wall with a narrow passage at the back.

DHAULI

The Ashokan rock-cut edicts at Dhauri (also called Dhaulagiri) are situated a few kilometers from Bhubaneswar in Orissa.

Dhauri is noteworthy for its Mauryan sculpture. Usually an element of Iranian influence is evident in Mauryan art but the sculpture at Dhauri is entirely indigenous. The large sculpture of the elephant seeks to emphasise the qualities of Buddha, as nobility and wisdom are the characteristics of an elephant.

5th-2nd Century BC

AJANTA

The Ajanta caves, situated 95 km from Aurangabad in Maharashtra, have both Hindu and Buddhist features. The Ajanta caves are one of the sources for identifying the Mahayana cultural ethos depicted in cave temples. Of the 30 caves dug out from rock caves 9 and 10 do not belong to the Vakataka period (See History: Dynasties).

The temple caves are all either chaityas or viharas. Ajanta caves are famous for their frescoes which even after so many

hundreds of years retain a semblance of the original hues and luminosity. The frescoes depict the various stages in the life of Buddha. The paintings represent a composition of action and thought (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

4th-2nd Century BC

LAURIYA NANDANGARH

Lauriya Nandangarh, located in Bihar, near Nepal, is known for the Ashoka pillar with six edicts. The pillar, made of gray chunar sandstone, is in excellent state of preservation: The pillar with a lion at the top is a typical example of a Mauryan column (See History: Dynasties).

2nd Century BC

AMARAVATI

Amaravati, located 30 km from Guntur in Andhra Pradesh was also known as Dhan-yakataka and was the eastern capital of the Satavahanas (See History: Dynasties) who ruled the area from the 2nd century AD.

The stupa at Amaravati was one of several built by Ashoka throughout the country to enshrine the relics of Buddha. The earliest sculptures, including one of a Yaksha date from 2nd century BC. The stupa was originally decorated with a series of slabs which were replaced by a new series around 100 AD.

The monument itself rests on a 1.5 m platform with a narrow circumambulatory passage. Around the passage was an exquisitely carved balustrade composed of uprights, cross-bars and coping with pairs of lions guarding the doorways at cardinal points. The balustrade which was created about 150 AD contains sculptures of the *Jatakas* (See Literature: Pali), Buddha's life and Yakshas. This balustrade is considered to be the best sculpture of the early period, even better than Sanchi. It has a diameter of about 60 m (See Religion: Buddhism).

BHAJA

Bhaja near Pune in Maharashtra is the oldest cave monastery of the 2nd century BC in western India. The stupa is plain and appears to have had paintings.

Bhaja represents the typical architecture of earlier cave monasteries in western India. Though large portions of the facade of the cave are lost, there remains a horseshoe shaped arch with rock beams that imitate wood. With its moulded balustrades and small chaitya arches it looks like a multi-storeyed balconied building. The vihara by the side of the chaitya is small and irregular. The iconographic content of the two reliefs near the doorway is an indication of the antiquity of this vihara.

KONDANE

The chaitya and vihara of the Kondane caves situated 7 km from Karjat railway station in Maharashtra are of special significance. The chaitya is 20.26 m in length, 8.12 m in width and 8.66 m high to the crown of the arch. It was originally surrounded by 30 pillars most of which have rolled away. The stupa inside was 2.74 m in diameter. The facade of the cave with its grand arch and rafters looks remarkably like carvings in wood. The single-storeyed cave resembles the Theravada type of architecture in which the central hall is not plain but pillared. The barrel roof and the great horseshoe window are characteristic of early caves in western India where the pattern consists of bands of railing and tiers of miniature chaitya windows resembling wood construction. The large hall measures 8 m × 8.3 m and is surrounded by a colonnade, with cells opening out from three sides.

2nd-1st Century BC

BHILSA

The excavations at Bhilsa, 8 km from Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh, revealed sculptures belonging to the Sunga period (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture), which included a Yakshi or Sri Lakshmi, Makara, Kama and a celestial tree that crowned the temple of Kubera or Lakshmi (See Religion: Hinduism).

Not far from Bhilsa, at Beshnagar, there is a column with Brahmi inscriptions describing it as a Garuda pillar set up by Heliodorus, who was ambassador of Antioch, king of Taxila to the court of King Bhagabhadra of Vidisha.

Nearby, there are early Gupta caves at Udayagiri (not to be confused with Udaigiri in Orissa), some of which are Jain and others Brahmanic. The more important caves are those with sculptures of Seshasayee Vishnu and Vishnu in the Varaha form (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranic Gods). The former cave illustrates the churning of the ocean – Amrita Manthana or Kshirasagara Manthana – for ambrosia. The latter depicts Varaha lifting Prithvi or earth from the Ocean (See Religion: Hinduism).

KHANDAGIRI & UDAIGIRI

About 6 km from Bhubaneswar in Orissa are three hills Udaigiri, Khandagiri and Nilgiri. There are 44 caves in Udaigiri, 19 in Khandagiri and 3 in Nilgiri. These caves were built by Kharavela, a contemporary of Pushyamitra Sunga (See History: Dynasties; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture) between the 1st and 2nd century BC for the use of the Jain monks. Most of the caves are austere and have just the bare necessities.



Bodh Gaya

Some of the sculptures here are reminiscent of those at Bharhut, Gaya and Sanchi.

1st Century BC

BODH GAYA

Bodh Gaya, 11 km south of Gaya in Bihar, is where the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi (Pipal) tree. The Simhasana or Vajrasana where Buddha performed penance is also seen below the tree. A railing was constructed around the tree around 100 BC during the period of the Sunga rulers (See History: Dynasties).

The medallions on the railings at Bodh Gaya portray a considerable variety of subjects. The existing style at Bodh Gaya was rebuilt around early medieval period and bears all the features of medieval architecture. This stupa is the inspiration for several such Buddhist structures found in Burma and Thailand. Gaya is also a sacred place for Hindus (See Holy Places).

2nd Century BC-2nd Century AD

BEDSA

At Bedsa, 8 km east of Bhaja, in Maharashtra, there is a small group of caves, the most important of which are the cells of the monks. The chaitya cave has a stupa. There are 24 artistic pillars in the hall. The absence of the image of Buddha against the chaitya is an indication of the early date of the cave.

The vihara cave has eleven cells, the doorways of which are surmounted by chaitya arches and a continuous balustrade pattern runs between them.

1st Century AD

KARLI

The sculptures of the four caves at Karli situated about 56 km from Pune are representative of the Satavahana architecture (See History: Dynasties).

Cave 1 has the largest and best preserved chaitya. The facade is still intact. The elaborate carving on the beams and rafters in imitation of wood construction suggests the beginnings of Buddhist temple architecture in the cave.

Cave 2 is a ruined three-storeyed viihara. On the rear right wall are 7th century carvings of Buddha.

Cave 3 is a two-storeyed viihara. The inscription of the cave suggests that it was built in the 2nd century AD. A pillar topped by four lions is reminiscent of the Ashokan pillar at Sarnath.

PALUR

St Thomas is believed to have landed in India in 52 AD and was the first to spread Christianity. Apostle Thomas had seven churches built in Kerala at Cranganore, Chayil, Palur, Parur, Quilon, Niranam and Koknamangalam. None of these churches remain today.

The church at Palur has preserved the Abhisheka Patra and certain Shaiva symbols carved in stone as relics of the original church, which is said to have been a Hindu shrine adapted for Christian worship. The first European church was, however, built by the Franciscans in Cochin in 1510 when Portuguese Admiral Alfonso Albuquerque constructed a factory. It now belongs to the Church of South India (See Religion: Christianity).

ST. THOMAS' MOUNT

The most important and historic Christian shrine in India is St. Thomas Mount, Mylapore, Madras built at the site of death of Apostle Thomas. There are references to the Mount and churches and monasteries at the site in the early writings of the church dating to 4th century AD (See Religion: Christianity).

1st-2nd Century AD

BHARHUT

Bharhut in Madhya Pradesh is famous for the architectural remains of the balustrade and toran which enclosed a stupa that no longer exists.

The importance of the architectural remains of Bharhut lies in the fact that for the first time scenes from the life of Buddha and the *Jatakas* with inscriptions are seen on such architectural forms (See Literature: Pali; Religion: Buddhism). Yet another

feature of Bharhut architecture is that there are no images of Buddha. Various stages of his life have been represented by symbols (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

2nd Century AD

NAGARJUNAKONDA

Nagarjunakonda, on the border of Nalgonda and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh is associated with the Buddhist philosopher, Nagarjuna. A part of the stupa was excavated in 1927-28 and then later in 1954. The excavations brought to light a large number of stupas, chaityas and monasteries besides some early Hindu temples.

The principal monument in Nagarjunakonda is the Mahachaitya constructed under the supervision of the revered monk, Ananda. It is said to have contained some corporal relics of the Buddha. This was a centre of learning from 150 AD to 300 AD evident in the nature and style of construction.

There are several stupas for votive offerings. Smaller stupas, monasteries and sanctuaries were added so that it became a Buddhist complex. The sculpture, reminiscent of Amaravati (also in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh), portray the *Jatakas*.

As the original excavated site of Nagarjunakonda was inundated by the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the architectural remains were shifted to a museum constructed nearby. In fact this is the only instance of mass shifting of an entire site.

2nd-3rd Century AD

JUNAGADH (EXCAVATIONS)

The Ashokan edict at Junagadh, Saurashtra, uses Brahmi characters. Huiien Tsang reports that he saw in this area 50 sangharamas with about 3,000 priests who mostly belonged to the Sthavira School of Mahayana Buddhism.

The Junagadh excavations reveal caves used by Buddhist monks for residential purposes. These caves may be divided into three groups – those at Junagadh proper, those in Uparkot and those called Khaprakhodia. The chaitya windows and the deep vaults at Uparkot measure 5.18 sq m. Ruins of two brick stupas also exist on a hill about 5 km away from the Ashokan edict.

The remains of cells at Junagadh signify the existence of a monastery. The two-tiered monastery was connected by a winding staircase. The lower storey and recess was surmounted by chaitya arches. There are six richly-carved columns sup-

porting the roof. Workmanship of this character was not known to exist in this area prior to 3rd century AD.

3rd-6th Century AD

AURANGABAD

Aurangabad in Maharashtra has several Buddhist caves. Except for Cave 4 which was built by the Satavahanas in the 2nd century AD, the others were built by the Vakatakas (See History: Dynasties). The sculptures illustrate the life of Buddha and the *Jataka* tales (See Literature: Pali; Religion: Buddhism). Cave 7 contains the most beautiful carvings in the entire complex.

ELEPHANTA

The Elephanta Caves of the Vakataka period (See History: Dynasties) are situated on an island near Bombay harbour. Of these, the largest is Cave 1 which is 40 m in width. Famous sculptures include the three-headed Shiva, a colossal bust that is usually referred to as Trimurti or Maheshamurti and combines three aspects of Shiva – the creator, the protector and the destroyer (See Religion: Hinduism).

SRAVASTI

Sravasti is situated 17 km from Balrampur in UP and is associated with the story of Buddha descending from heaven and with Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras. Several stupas, a monastery, the remains of a large city wall and its gates and a large number of terracotta plaques of the Gupta period (See History: Dynasties) have been unearthed here. Buddha is said to have delivered several of his important lectures here (See Religion: Buddhism, Jainism).

4th-5th Century AD

VISHNUPADA

The iron pillar at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque near the Qutub Minar in Delhi is known as Vishnupada. It is a memorial to King Chandra (probably Chandra Gupta II, 376-415). The pillar was probably brought to Delhi by King Anangapala in the 11th century. The pillar, a single piece of iron, over 7 m in height, has never rusted, a fact attributed to the purity of the metal.

4th-9th Century AD

CHIDAMBARAM

Chidambaram in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu is renowned for the temple of Nataraja. Originally built during the Pallava period (See History: Dynasties), the temple has been so often renovated and so many additions made that very little of the original construction is left. Of the four towers

(gopuras) three belong to the 13th and one to the 16th century.

The temple buildings at Chidambaram cover an area of 16 hectares. There are five principal temples and two smaller ones dedicated to Vishnu and Ganesha. The image of Ganesha is said to be the largest anywhere in India.

As the temple is devoted to Nataraja or Lord of Dance, there are several panels with explanatory text from the *Natya Shastra* (See Performing Arts: Dance).

Of special interest are two halls – one with a thousand pillars and another with a hundred pillars. These belong to the Chola period (See History: Dynasties).

There are four main paths of Shaivism, Charya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana (See Philosophy). The four great saints connected with all these paths, Appar, Gyana Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavachakar are all associated with Chidambaram (See Sages and Saints).

KANCHIPURAM

Kanchipuram, 80 km south east of Madras dates back to the 2nd century BC. Interestingly, Kanchipuram or Kanjivaram as it is more popularly known, is divided into two sections based on temples. Shiva Kanchi has the Kailasanatha, Vaikuntha Perumal and Ekambareswara temples.

Vishnu Kanchi, five km from Shiva Kanchi, has a temple dedicated to Vishnu. It is an ancient shrine which has been extensively renovated during Chola and Vijayanagara times (See History: Dynasties). It has one of the largest courts of any temple in the area. With sculptures of prancing yalis (horse-lions), it bears close resemblance to similar temples in Srirangam (See Holy Places) and Vellore.

A peetha (seat) of Shankara Sampradaya headed by a Shankaracharya (See Sages and Saints) is at Kanchi and is known as Kamakoti Peetha.

KILMAVILANGAI

Kilmavilangai, in the South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu has a small rock-cut shrine dedicated to Vishnu of the early Mahendra Varman period of Pallava art (See History: Dynasties). Known as Mukara Perumal temple, it is cut into the northern face of a rock and measures 1.52 m × .94 m. A heavy image of Vishnu appears in relief on the wall.

KUNNAKUD

The cave temples at Kunnakud, 11 km to the west of Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu resemble Pallava shrines. One of the temples is dedicated to Vishnu who with his hand resting on Garuda is reminiscent of a similar figure at Mamallapuram.

Another cave temple has an eight-armed dancing Nataraja. The guardians at the temple entrance point to the Pandyan school of architecture. Loops and tassels characterise their waistbands as in the Pallava figures (See History: Dynasties).

BHAIRAVAKONDA

Bhairavakonda in the Vellore district of Andhra Pradesh has a group of eight temples built into part of a hill. The caves resemble Pallava architecture of the Mahendra Varman period (See History: Dynasties). Though all the three major Gods are represented in these temples, the pride of place is given to Shiva. Cave 1 and 3 contain a Shivalinga. One of the important carvings is the multi-armed dancing Shiva or Nataraja.

MAHENDRAVADI

Mahendravadi, in the North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu, has a rock-cut temple on the eastern side of a boulder dated between 325 and 879 AD. The facade has two square pillars. The mandapa leads to the central cell for Vishnu. The door keepers are elegantly carved but of heavy build. This is a good example of very early Pallava art of the Mahendra Varman period (See History: Dynasties). There is no sculpture in the shrine.

MANDAGAPPATTU

Mandagappattu, a village in the South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu has a very important Pallava temple of the Mahendra Varman period carved out of granite rock sometime between 325 and 897 AD. The temple is dedicated to the Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The facade is simple with two heavy pillars. Dwarapalakas in smaller niches guard the cave (See Religion: Buddhism – Dikpala). At the rear of the temple, there are three shrines, all of which are empty.

MOGALRAJAPURAM

The early cave temples at Mogalrajapuram, near Eluru, in Andhra Pradesh are the only surviving examples of early medieval art of Vengi, the capital of the Vishnukundins after the 5th and 6th century AD. These are the precursors of the earliest cave temples of Mahendra Varman Pallava near Kanchipuram.

The style of columns, pilasters and reliefs in the cave temples of Vishnukundins served as the model for the early Pallava ones at Tiruchirapalli and Dalavanur. The massive pillars in the caves of Mahendra Varman follow the Mogalrajapuram pattern. The sculpture of the multi-armed Shiva dancing on the demon of ignorance, Apasmara is a combination of the north-

ern characteristic of multiple arms and the southern theme of trampling on the dwarfish demon.

UNDAVALLI

The multi-storeyed 5th-6th century Undavalli caves are very close to Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. The carvings on the pillars here are considered to be the precursors of the reliefs at Mahabalipuram. Narasimha and Trivikrama have been represented in reliefs here in much the same manner as those at Badami and Mahabalipuram.

The Vishnukundins who built these cave temples at Undavalli were related to the Pallavas, the Vakatakas, who in turn were related to the Guptas (See History: Dynasties). Hence there is a common strand running through the sculpture of this period (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

BADAMI

Originally known as Vatapi, Badami was the capital of the early western Chalukyas. The place is now in the Bijapur district of Karnataka.

These caves were excavated about 6th century AD during the reign of Mangalesa. Cave 1 which is probably the earliest is a temple of Shiva containing an eight-armed Nataraja dancing on a pedestal. Carved panels on the walls depict Shiva, Parvati and Lakshmi.

Cave 2 is a Vishnu shrine with excellent carvings on the lintels and walls. Cave 3 is unimportant except for a few carvings of Bodhisattva Padmapani. Next to the Vaishnava cave is a small Jain cave, built about the same time. It contains a carving of Mahavira seated on a lion throne and carvings of Gomateswara and Parsvanatha. A Shiva temple called Malegretti-Shivalaya of the Chalukyan period is a simple shrine in the southern style. Nearby, a cluster of temples of varying periods are dedicated to Shiva as Bhutanatha (See Religion: Hinduism, Jainism).

GWALIOR

Gwalior fort, probably India's oldest fort, was built in 525 AD by Suraj Sen, a Rajput chief, at the instance of an ascetic named Gwalior who had cured him of leprosy. During the course of its chequered history, Gwalior changed hands several times.

Towering 100 m above the old town, the fort is situated on a precipitous flat-topped isolated sandstone hill. It measures 2.8 km in length and 850 m across at its widest part.

The Man Mandir Palace was built between 1486-1517 by Raja Man Singh

Tomar. Karan Mahal and Jehangir Mahal are close by. Inside the fort there are twin sas-bahu (mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) temples built in the 11th century (See People: Kinship). The third temple called the Teli Mandir, also built in 11th or 12th century has a combination of north and south Indian architecture. It was initially dedicated to Vishnu and was later dedicated to Ganesha.

The tomb of the Muslim saint Muhammad Ghaus is a superb example of early Mughal architecture. And the 16th century musician Tansen is buried within the fort (See Performing Arts: Music). The Jari Vilas Palace was built in the 1800s combines Tuscan and Corinthian styles.

SANKARAM

Sankaram caves which contain Buddhist monastic remains are located in the Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Built on a hill, these caves show the skills of rock-cut architecture and brick masonry. Built in the early 6th century during the Vishnukundin period they are a reflection of the impact of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism in the area (See Religion: Buddhism).

The remains comprise a large number of monolithic stupas, a series of rock-cut chambers and foundations of an extensive monastic building.

6th-10th Century AD

KAZHUGUMALAI

Locally known as Vattuvan Koil or sculptor's temple, the rock-cut monastic temple at Kazhugumalai in Tamil Nadu built by the Pandyas has been carved out of an entire hill. An interesting feature of this temple is that it has been carved from the top to base. The temple incorporates aspects of Badami, Ellora and Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram) and contains sculpted figures of Shiva, Parvati, Narasimha and Dakshinamurti. Certain carvings point to the social life of the period (See Performing Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

MADURAI

Madurai in Tamil Nadu was the capital of the Pandyan kings (See History: Dynasties). The most important temple is that of Meenakshi-Sundareswara (See Holy Places: Temples). The temple is situated in a parallelogram 258 m × 222 m and contains nine gopurams, the biggest of which is 40 m high. Within the temple complex itself there is a thousand pillared hall built in 1560 with beautiful sculptures. While the gopurams were built in 17th century, the courts are far older.

SIRPUR

Sirpur in the Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh was once the capital of the kings of Sarabhapura and their successors in Dakshin Kosala. It was an important Buddhist centre from 6th – 10th century AD. Excavations have revealed two Buddhist temples with large statues of the Buddha. An interesting feature of these sculptures is that they are composed of individual carved blocks as in Borobudur.

Another important monument here is the Vishnu temple, locally called Lakshmana temple, built towards the end of the 7th century. Made of brick, the temple compares with similar earlier temples at Ahichhatra and Bhitargaon. It shows that the style of architecture continued up to the reign of Vardaman. The sculptures of the temple can be compared with the carvings of Rajivalochana temples at Rajim for their aesthetic quality and workmanship (See Rajim).

AIHOLE

Aihole in the Bijapur district of Karnataka contains representative west Chalukyan (See History: Dynasties) architecture of the 7th century. It is the most important architectural complex of medieval India.

The Jain temple of Meguti was built in 634 AD on top of a hill. There is a large image of a Tirthankara but the most important image is that of Yakshi Ambika seated on a lion. The niches are empty.

Lad Khan is the oldest temple at Aihole, which though originally meant for Vishnu, now has a Shivalinga. Kontapudi (name of the trident) has massive pillars which are better-shaped than those of Lad Khan while the Durga temple pillars are more elegantly carved than those of Kontapudi or Lad Khan (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

MAHABALIPURAM

About 60 km from Madras lies the sleepy village of Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram earlier), a bustling port city in the time of Mahendra Varman (670-715), the Pallava king (See History: Dynasties). None of the former maritime glory remains but thousands of tourists visit it for the bas-relief, the largest in the world, showing the descent of Ganga or Arjuna's penance. A serene shore temple stands sentinel to the passage of centuries. This group of monuments consists of ten mandapas or excavated halls besides seven monolithic rathas or temple cars, five of them named for the Pandava brothers (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). The mandapas, about 4.5 – 6 m are noted for their pillars and wall cornices and for the perfect blend of figure sculpture with architecture (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).



Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram

The architecture of the monolithic rathas is based on the old Buddhist monasteries or viharas. Based on a square or oblong plan, the elevation is pyramidal but varies in size and detail. The largest and most complete is the Dharmaraja Ratha which combines the best features of the Pallava style – the pillars in the portico with rampant lions, the pyramid-shaped tower and the turreted roof. The Bhima, Ganesha and Sahadeva Rathas are based on the architecture of the Buddhist chaitya hall. Standing 2 – 3 storeys high, they are surmounted by a barrel roof with the chaitya gable at the ends. Here we see the beginnings of the magnificent Dravidian gopurams that became an essential part of temple architecture six centuries later.

The Shore Temple falls into the second phase of Mamallapuram architecture and belongs to the period between 700 and 800 AD. The structural solidity has withstood constant battering of wind, sea and sand for over twelve centuries. An enormous wall once enclosed the temple.



BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa is known as the city of temples. Of these, the oldest is the Parasurameswara temple built in the 8th century AD.

The temples at Bhubaneswar are classified into three groups from an architectural point of view. The Parasurameswara and Mukteswara temples fall into the first group. The second group consists of a few temples at Bhubaneswar, Baudh and Khiching. The temples of Lingaraja and Anantavasudeva fall into a third group.

Lingaraja, dedicated to Shiva and built around 1000 AD is the most important temple with the largest tower (55 m) in Orissa. Next to Lingaraja temple is the Rajrani temple which is different from other Orissan temples. It is architecturally closer to central Indian temples like those at Khajuraho. Built in the 12th century, the temples represent a well defined relation between god, nature and man (See Holy Places: Temples).

8th–13th Century AD

MUKHALINGAM

Mukhalingam, located in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh was at one time the capital of the eastern Gangas of Kalinga (8th-13th century). Of the three temples, Mukhalingeswara is the earliest shrine. These temples indicate the spread of Kalinga style. The architectural features are similar to those of the temples in Bhubaneswar.

ANAMALAI

Anamalai is a hill resembling an elephant, 13 km from Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Besides some caverns and early Jain inscriptions in Brahmi, there is a cave temple dedicated to Narasimha built in 770 AD. Another temple in the vicinity known as Ladamuni, also of the same period, is dedicated to Subrahmanya and his consort (See Religion: Hinduism—Puranic Gods, Kartikeya).

ELLORA

Ellora, 33 km from Aurangabad in Maharashtra, is often clubbed with Ajanta. The 8th century caves extend for over a kilometer.

The first group of 12 caves is Buddhist, the second Brahmanic (17), the third Jain (5).

The Buddhist caves are chaityas or viharas containing sculptures of incidents from the life of Buddha or tales from the *Jatakas*. There are figures of Bodhisattvas and Buddhist goddesses.

Of the Brahmanical caves, cave 16, the Kailasa temple is a freestanding shrine carved out of solid rock. The 50 m × 33 m × 29 m temple, dedicated to Shiva, is two-storeyed and the deity is in the lower storey. The sculpture indicates the beginnings of south Indian architecture. There are two large elephants near the entrance.

Among the Jain caves, cave 30 is a smaller edition of the Kailasa temple. The other caves contain figures of Parsvanath, Tirthankaras, Gomateswara and others from Jain mythology.

Most of the paintings in the caves have been destroyed. Those which are still available, though in a poor state, are the only examples of Rashtrakuta art (See History: Dynasties; Religion: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

MARTAND

Martand in Kashmir contains the ruins of a Sun temple, perhaps the largest with the exception of Konarak, dedicated to the sun, built by King Lalitaditya in the 8th century. The architecture is typically Kashmiri in style. The Sun god on the chariot can still be seen along with long floral scrolls, elaborate arabesques and carvings of birds.

PATTADAKAL

Pattadakal is a village not far from Aihole in Karnataka and it is famous for early 8th century western Chalukyan temples that represent both the northern and southern styles of architecture (See History: Dynasties). The structures and carvings depict scenes from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and the lives of Krishna, Shiva and Parvati (See Religion: Hinduism).

Among the more important temples are those of Virupaksha Mallikarjuna, Kashi Vishwanatha, Sangameswara, Chandra-sekhara, Galaganatha, Jambulinga, Kada Siddheswara and Papanatha. The inscriptions on the Papanatha temple reveal that the western Chalukyan king, Vikramaditya II brought sculptors and architects from Kanchipuram for the construction of temples at Pattadakal (See History: Dynasties).

NAMAKKAL

Namakkal in Salem district of Tamil Nadu has two rock-cut temples of the 8th century that show influences of Pallava architecture. One of the two temples is dedicated to Ranganatha. Carved out of the eastern scarp of a hill, the temple is simple with a mandapa and a sanctum and rests on a raised platform. It has the sun, moon, tanpura, trivikrama and nakshada depicted on the walls.

The second temple, dedicated to Lakshminarayana, is made up of a central shrine, three cells and a mandapa supported by two pillars.

MASRUR

The nine, freestanding temples at Masrur in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, are among the few rock-cut temples of north India. Of these nine temples only one has an interior. The others have only door frames, the interior being solid rock.

The architecture generally follows the Gupta period (See History: Dynasties) the finished interior contains carved panels of various gods from the Hindu pantheon which include Shiva, Indra, Surya, Kartikeya and Ganesha (See History: Dynasties; Religion: Hinduism). Vishnu has been depicted in human form typically flanked by a boar and a lion.

At present the temple has the image of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana installed in recent times.

ALAMPUR

Alampur, in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh has a cluster of 8th century temples representative of early western Chalukyan architecture (See History: Dynasties).

The eight temples, though dedicated to Shiva, are known as Bala Brahma, Kumara Brahma, Arka Brahma, Vira Brahma, Taraka Brahma, Garuda Brahma, Swarga Brahma and Padma Brahma. Some temples have ribbed shikharas; others in the southern style, have octagonal shikharas.

The temples represent various aspects of Shiva. On the facade of Vira Brahma temple, sixteen-armed Shiva is shown in the warrior pose. Swarga Brahma temple represents the Lalita aspect. The Garuda Brahma temple shows the Gangadhara aspect i.e. the release of Ganga.

It is believed that Vikramaditya II of the western Chalukyas brought sculptors from his southern kingdom to construct these temples (See History: Dynasties).

RAJIM

The Rajivalochana temple at Rajim, about 50 km from Raipur in Madhya Pradesh is dedicated to Vishnu and was built around the 8th century. The main shrine which has a sanctum, a vestibule and an open mandapa is for Rajivalochana, while the other smaller shrines are dedicated to Badrinath, Vamana, Varaha and Narasimha (See Religion: Hinduism). Prominent sculptures include the Trivikrama with foot thrown into the mouth of Rahu and Sesha Naga adorning him from below; Vamana receiving a gift from king Bali; Yuganarayana in meditation and Narasimha destroying Hiranyakasipu (See Religion: Hinduism – Vishnu – Dashavatara).

A study of the temple at Rajim leads one to understand better the architecture of Mahakosala, a region bordering on Orissa, where Sarabhapura sovereigns ruled as feudatories of the Guptas and Vakatakas (See History: Dynasties).

AVANTIPUR

The few remains at Avantipur, 24 km before Srinagar on the Jammu-Srinagar highway are a testimony to this temple built in the 9th century. Dedicated to Vishnu, it is called the Avantiswamy temple after the king. The layout of the temple and the sculpture are similar to those of the temple for Martand. There are 69 cells around the country and about one km away from this temple are the ruins of the Avantiswara temple to Shiva.

SITTANNAVASAL

The Jain cave shrine in Sittannavasal in the Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu, said to have been cut between 815 and 862 AD, is decorated with murals comparable to those of Ajanta and Bagh and embodies the concept of atalmana in painting (See Philosophy: Jaina). The Pandya king Avanipa Sekhara Sri Vallabha Pandya patronised this shrine, a treasurehouse of Pandyan wall paintings (See History: Dynasties).

9th-12th Century AD

HEMAVATI

Hemavati in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh was once the capital of the Nolambas, who were the feudatories of the western Gangas and Rashtrakutas (See History: Dynasties). Of the three main temples built between the 9th and 12th century, the Doddappa and Mallikarjuna are important.

The temple architecture follows the Chalukyan idiom but the art is much simpler than that of either Chalukyas or Rashtrakutas. One main feature of these temples is the vessel-of-plenty (akshyapatra) motif seen on either side of the doorway. The mandapa pillars at Hemavati are so exquisite and full of diverse themes that Chola emperor Rajendra carried away some as trophies.

GURGI

Gurgi, which is 20 km from Rewa in Madhya Pradesh has enormous ruins (9th – 12th century). A large circular shrine is dedicated to Shiva. Excavations nearby have revealed several large sculptures including those of Durga and Haragauri.

The most important piece of architecture is the exquisite 'toran' depicting the marriage of Shiva. It originally adorned the Shiva temple but now stands before the Rewa palace. Richly carved, it is reminiscent of similar 'torans' from Warangal in Andhra Pradesh.

KHAJURAHO

Located about 40 km north of Panna in Madhya Pradesh, the Khajuraho temple complex was built during the reign of king Dhanga, a Chandela ruler who came to power in 950. The Kandariya Mahadeva, Devi Jagadamba, Chitragupta, Visvanatha, Parsvanatha and Vamana temples were all built around that time, though the Lakshmana and Chaturbhujia temples were built by an earlier King Yasovarman.

The temples at Khajuraho fall into three main groups. The western group consists of Brahmanical temples to Shiva and Vishnu, the northern group has Vaishnava temples and the south-eastern



Khajuraho

group has Jain temples. Khajuraho is famed for its erotic sculptures (See Holy Places: Temples).

KODUMBALUR

Kodumbalur, in the Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu is known for its early Chola temples. Muvarkoil, a temple to Shiva, is a fine example of the grand style of Chola kings Nagaraja and Rajendra. Of the three temples which constituted the complex of Muvarkoil, only two exist today.

Sculptures include hybrid monsters in a frieze and Makara heads on the torans along with Gangadhara, Chandrasekhara, Umamaheswara and Dakshinamurti. The temple represents simplicity and elegance of Chola art in its early phase (See History: Dynasties).

Aivarkoil, to the south of Muvarkoil is in ruins. It must have had five shrines architecturally common in the north but very rare in the south.

OSIA

Osia, about 54 km north of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, has a group of temples, now in ruins, built between the 9th and 11th centuries of the Gurjara-Pratihara period.

The Sanchiyamata temple is surrounded by five temples of Vishnu, one of them sacred to Harihara. All of them have small porches in front supported by early medieval pillars which are elaborately carved. Another Harihara temple is on a very high platform with a frieze of elaborate designs. The subsidiary shrines also have ornate doorways. The lintels and niches have sculptures of various deities like Ganesha, Vishnu, Lakshminarayana, Umamaheswara and Kartikeya (See Religion: Hinduism).

Osia was also an important centre of Jainism. The Jain temple here is dedicated to Mahavira and belongs to the 10th century (See Religion: Jainism). It has elaborately carved pillars and decorative details like the Dilwara temples (See Holy Places: Temples). This temple, though in existence in the 8th century, had undergone extensive renovation in the 10th century.

SRAVANABELAGOLA

The colossal statue of Gomateswara stands at Sravanabelagola, 80 km north-east of Mysore in Karnataka. Gomateswara is the son of Adinatha (also called Rishabhadeva) the first Tirthankara. The statue is 17 m high and is a fine example of western Ganga architecture of the 10th century.

There are also several temples called 'basati' of which the larger and finer ones are of the time of Chamundaraya (10th century), though some of them belong to 12th century. A typical Jain freestanding

pillar faces the main entrance to the temple of Parsvanatha (See Holy Places: Jaina Shrines; Religion: Jainism; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

CHANDREHI

The Shiva temple and monastery at Chandrehi in Madhya Pradesh was built around 947 during the reign of the Haihaya rulers. Built on a high platform, there is a circular sanctum, a mandapa in front, another enclosed hall and a vestibule. It has a ribbed shikhara and the roof of the mandapa is pyramidal. This temple is the earliest example of Haihaya architecture.

BRIHADISWARA

Thanjavur, about 300 km south-west of Madras in Tamil Nadu is renowned for the greatest of Chola monuments – the Brihadiswara temple (See Holy Places: Temples). Built by the Chola, King Rajaraja I (985-1013 AD) in six years between 1004-1010 the temple, dedicated to Shiva, has two courts. The outer court, a square of about 65 m was originally devoted to minor shrines but the French converted it into an arsenal in 1777. The temple itself is in a courtyard 152 m × 76 m. The main deity, Brihadiswara, is also called Adavallar and Dakshina Meru Vitakan. The goddess is called Brihannayaki.

The great vimana of the temple is 66 m high with 14 storeys. It is a marvel of engineering and no one knows how the single stone 80-tonne vimana was manoeuvred into place. The shikhara is crowned by a massive monolithic dome. The Shivalinga in the temple is 1.2 m tall and has a circumference of 2.1.

The shrine of Brihannayaki is located between Nandi Mandapa and Brihadiswara temple. This is believed to have been constructed by the Pandyan rulers in the 13th century (See History: Dynasties).

The Nandi Mandapa has a massive statue of Nandi which is 3.6 m high, 5.9 m long and 2.5 m broad.

Many of the motifs in the sculptures on the gopurams are drawn from Vaishnava legends. Frescos of the Chola period were discovered in the circumambulatory corridor of the Ardhmandapa.

Brihadiswara is one of those Dravidian temples conceived and commenced on a well-defined and stately plan and carried through to its completion.

Thanjavur is also famous for the Saraswati Mahal Library which has about 33,433 Sanskrit and vernacular palm leaf manuscripts and 6426 printed volumes. Most of the Sanskrit manuscripts were collected during the 300 year rule of the Nayaks and Marathas.

KUKKANUR

Kukkanur near Gadap in Karnataka has a Mahamaya temple with late additions of the Vijayanagara period (See History: Dynasties). The temple is basically western Chalukyan in style. Nine earlier shrines clustered together make up the Navalinga temple. There are four mandapas contiguous to the shrines. The pillars show an advance in style over the earlier Chalukyan one seen at Pattadakal.

From a study of the inscriptions on the shrine, it appears that it was originally dedicated to various goddesses though today there are shrines in the cell with Nandis facing them in the mandapas, an indication that the temple may have been dedicated to Shiva.

KIRADU

Kiradu, 25 km from Barmer in Rajasthan has a group of 11th century temples, most of which are in ruins. Only one temple dedicated to Someswara is still intact. The intricate carving on the pillars of the hall depict deities, celestial beauties and the rope-of-pearl motifs. The entrance doorway has carved images of Trimurti. Surya is depicted with sixteen arms. The architecture is reminiscent of the Gupta period (See History: Dynasties).

TELI-KA-MANDIR

Though Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh is well known for its forts, it also boasts of several 11th century monuments. One important temple is Teli-ka-mandir built in the Vesara style with a barrel-shaped vimana. The temple, constructed in 3 tiers with limited embellishment is now in ruins.

MODHERA

The Sun temple at Modhera was built around 1026 AD during the reign of Bhima I (See Holy Places: Temples). The ruins of the temple still show a shrine with an ambulatory, an adjoining pillared hall and a large assembly hall in front. There is also a large reservoir. At intervals on the way down to the water, there are small pavilions enshrining different forms of Shiva, Vishnu, Devi and Surya among other gods.

UDAYESVARA

A temple dedicated to Udayesvara was built between 1059-1080 at Udaipur in Madhya Pradesh. The Shiva temple has a central hall, three entrance porches and a long hall. The large semi-circular niche decorated with the figure of multi-armed Shiva dancing with Saraswati and Parvati is considered to be a masterpiece of Paramara art. There is a wealth of Brahmanic iconography in addition to other themes. Of the eight small shrines around the temple,

two are completely lost and the others are in a state of disrepair.

A temple dedicated to Udayesvara was built by the Paramara king, Udaipanditya between 1059 and 1089. The temple with rectangular projections facing cardinal points is surrounded by parapets.

LETHI

The Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque (See Holy Places: Mosques), located in the grounds of the Qutub Minar in Delhi, in a large rectangular court was constructed by Qutubud-Din Aibak, a ruler of the Slave dynasty (See History: Dynasties) from 1193 to 1197. The material for the construction came from 27 Hindu and Jain temples. The main attraction here is the rust-free iron pillar that uses technology that baffles modern day observers.

RAMESWARAM

Rameswaram is a gem of late Dravidian architecture. It is best known for the magnificent corridors lined with enormous sculptured figures, beautifully carved. One of the corridors, the longest in the country, is 1220 m. The gopuram is 53.6 m high. The temple which was begun in the 12th century was added to by successive rulers (See Holy Places: Temples; Myths and Legends).

11th-13th Century AD

MOUNTABU

Mount Abu in Rajasthan is part of the Aravalli range. Though there are some Hindu temples, the Abu complex built between 1032 and 1232 is famous for its Jain temples. The earliest of the group of marble Jain temples is at Dilwara (See Holy Places: Jaina Shrines) dedicated to Adinatha, the first Tirthankara.

The temple of Neminatha, the 22nd Jain Tirthankara was built, also in marble, in the 12th century. Both the temples are influenced by the Gujarati style of architecture. The carving and sculpture of Neminatha is superior to that of the Adinatha temple. The temple stands unrivalled for the minute delicacy of carving and beauty of detail in marble. Of particular interest is the finely-carved multiple lotus in the mandapa.

BELUR

The Chennakeshaveswara temple at Belur in the Hassan district of Karnataka was built by the Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 (See History: Dynasties). It underwent changes during the reign of his successor. The carvings and sculpture of the three star-shaped shrines cover a vast range of the Indian pantheon. The intri-

cate and delicate workmanship is amongst the best-known in Hoysala architecture. The architectural values of the Chennakeshveshvara temple indicate a stage of near-perfection as in the temples at Mt. Abu (See Holy Places: Temples).

HALEBID

Halebid (12th-13th century) in Karnataka, the capital of Hoysala was known as Dvarasamudra. The Hoysaleswara temple containing the icons of Shiva and Ganesha is an example of the best of Hoysala architecture. The supporting pillars are so perfect they seem to be lathe-turned. The details of carvings are exquisite.

The temple is renowned for the monolithic Ganesha and a big seated humped bull (Nandi). The Nandi is in a pillared pavilion and its guardians are carved with elaborate precision and detail (See Holy Places: Temples).

SOMNATHPUR

Somnathpur, 36 km from Srirangapatnam in Karnataka, contains a miniature temple with a wealth of sculptural detail. It is a triple shrine with star-shaped vimanas dedicated to Kesava and Venugopala. The temple bears the stamp of Hoysala architecture with its intricately carved friezes and bright polished pillars.

DARASURAM

The Shiva temple at Darasuram, two km south of Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu was built during the reign of the Chola King Rajaraja (See History: Dynasties). The upper portion of the gopuram at the entrance is lost but there are several carvings of apsaras and Shivaganas in the portion that remains. Long, narrow friezes of miniature dancing figures provide the keynote to the temple architecture.

At the entrance to the temple, there is a mandapa, whose outer pillars have lotus petal capitals. The prominent tips of the petals are characteristic of the period.

Among the notable Chola works of art are the Ardhanariswara with eight arms and three faces, a four-armed Nagaraja, Agastya, Narasimha and Ganesha (See Religion: Hinduism). The shrine of Devi with several carvings is adjacent to the main temple. From the large number of figures that stress themes of dance and music, it appears that Bharata Natyam was popular at the time (See Performing Arts: Dance).

DODDA GADDAVALLI

Dodda Goddavalli, a village 18 km from Hassan in Karnataka has a complex of five temples built in 1113 by a merchant prince during the reign of the Hoysala King Vish-



The Konarak wheel

nuvardhana (See History: Dynasties). Four of the five shrines are connected by a mandapa. The large court that surrounds this cluster has shrines at the corner which together make up nine towers or vimanas in the Hoysala style. The shrines are dedicated to Mahalakshmi, Bhutanatha Shiva, Bhairava and Kali (See Religion: Hinduism).

HAVERI

The shrine of Siddheswara (Shiva) at Haveri in Dharwar district is typical of Chalukyan (See History: Dynasties) art of the 12th century. Unlike most temples, this temple faces west and rises on a high base, like most Chalukyan temples. Though the temple was originally dedicated to Shiva, it seems to have been used by Jains too, over the centuries.

The doorway of the antechamber has representations of Trimurti, which is characteristically Chalukyan (See History: Dynasties). A fine example of Chalukyan art is the bust of Devi with ringlets on her forehead and an elaborate crown.

KONARAK

The magnificent Sun temple built in the 12th century at Konarak, 45 km north east of Puri in Orissa, was originally built on a platform, which represented the chariot of

Surya the Sun god. There were originally 24 wheels, some of which have been lost. The chariot was drawn by rows of horses measuring about 2 m in height. The diameter of each wheel is 3 m. The width of the rim is 20 cm. Each wheel has 24 spokes elaborately carved with medallions and animal figures.

The temple itself with an audience hall, dance hall and smaller shrines suggests that Konarak was once an enormous complex. The temple tower does not exist now.

The Konarak temple represents the final phase of temple architecture in Orissa and bears a close relationship with the Bhubaneswar temples, even though a century separates it from the Rajrani temple. According to reports, the entire revenue of Orissa (Rs. 3 crore annually) was spent for 12 years on the construction of the temple (See Holy Places: Temples).

KUMBAKONAM

The most important temple in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu is the Nageswara-swamy temple is dedicated to Shiva. The central shrine belongs to the very early Chola period while the mandapa features architectural elements of the 12th century. The gopuram was built later. The temple itself is in two storeys. The sculptures of

Ardhanariswara, Brahma, Durga, and Dakshinamurthy represent the characteristic elegance of early Chola art. The picture of a nobleman gives an idea of life in the 9th century at the time of Cholas (See History: Dynasties). A Ganesha of eastern Ganga workmanship sits in a separate cell guarding the entrance to the shrine. The temple for Kumbheswara (after whom the town has been named) was built during the reign of Nayaka rulers. Mahamakham is celebrated here once in 12 years and during these days the tank near the temple is believed to be particularly holy (See Holy Places: Kumbha Mela).

The temple dedicated to Sarangapani (Vishnu) carries Bharata Natyam dance postures in relief (See Performing Arts: Dance).

The Ramaswamy temple is a masterpiece of 16th century Nayaka architecture. The main shrine houses seated figures of Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Bharata, Lakshmana, Shatrughna, Vibhishana and Sugriva (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics). It is the most imposing group of sculptures in a sanctum anywhere in India.

MAHAKUTESWARA

The principal shrine of this 12th century temple complex, 5 km from Badami is dedicated to Shiva as Mahakuteswara.

Within the enclosure is a large masonry tank containing a central pavilion with a five-faced linga. To the north of the tank is the Mahakuteswara temple and to the south, the Mallikarjuna temple. The temples differ in styles – Mahakuteswara is reminiscent of the southern style whereas the others are representative of the nagara or northern style.

The Mahakuteswara shrine has a small porch with square pillars almost austere devoid of decoration, a mandapa and a shrine. The windows are characteristic of these early Chalukyan temples (See History: Dynasties).

SRIRANGAM

The temple at Srirangam, 5 km north of Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, is dedicated to Ranganatha (See Holy Places: Temples). This temple has been supported by all southern dynasties, including the Vijayanagara kings (See History: Dynasties). However, vestiges of original structures are lost.

Architecturally, the temple, associated with Ramanuja, a great exponent of Vaishnavism of the 12th century, represents different styles of the south. The main shrine is elliptical with four gopurams. There are seven concentric courts, each with gopurams on the walls and nearly the entire city

is contained within these courts. The most imposing of the mandapas is the thousand-pillared hall and the Seshagiriraya mandapa in the fourth enclosure.

HANAMKONDA

The temple at Hanamkonda in Andhra Pradesh is typical of the medieval Kakatiya style of the 13th century – a high plinth, elaborate friezes and a mandapa with innumerable pillars. The huge bracket figures supported by the pillars show intricately carved dance postures.

GANGAIKONDACHOLAPURAM

Gangaikondacholapuram, 36 km from Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu was once the capital of the Cholas (See History: Dynasties). It was established by Rajendra Chola, emperor in the 12th century, who built a temple dedicated to Shiva in gratitude for his successes in his many campaigns. The temple is considered to be very graceful in its contours, better than the one at Thanjavur.

Two flights of steps near the closed mandapa made of pillared sections lead to the main temple guarded by colossal figures. All the walls have elaborate carvings of gods and goddesses and one wall has the entire story of Bhagiratha's penance. One of the slabs depicts the nine planets and the sun, shown as a lotus and combines the northern and southern concepts of the nine planets (See Cosmos: Astrology).

14th-16th Century AD

HAMPI

Hampi, in the Bellary district of Karnataka was the capital of the Vijayanagar kingdom (See History: Dynasties). Now on the world heritage list, these medieval ruins stretch 26 km along the Tungabhadra river. Originally covering 33 km this empire of Krishnadevaraya has a magical reality to it. The Vithala temple with its musical pillars and the monolithic chariot is amazing in architectural concept and style.

The Ramaswamy temple is small and dainty and is noted for the carving of scenes from the *Ramayana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics). The temple has two big monolithic statues, a 6.7 m Narasimha and a 2.4 m Ganesha.

The architecture here is representative of Vijayanagar style. The main temple in the Hampi complex is the Virupaksha temple dedicated to Shiva. Facing east, the temple overlooks the broad road which was the main market area. It has a tall gopuram and the ceiling of the pillared hall is covered with murals.

Other monuments include the queen's bath with its elaborate stucco work and projecting balconies, indicative of a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles. Of particular architectural interest is the massive stone platform called Mahanavami Dibba.

A large pillared hall once stood on the platform and one can still decipher from the ruins the friezes decorated with elephants, horses, dances, musicians and processions.

MANDU

Mandu, just two towns away from Indore by road, was known in the 15th century as Shadiabad or City of Joy. Perched atop the Malwa plateau it is 615 m above sea level. The thick walls of the fort extend 45 km and enclose one of the loveliest complexes of fairy-tale palaces and lakes which became a favourite monsoon retreat of the Mughals (See History: Dynasties).

The Jami Masjid (See Holy Places: Mosques) is a large building that borrows from Afghan architecture and was begun by Hoshang Shah but completed by Mohammed Shah I around 1440. Its open court is 50 sq m in area and is enclosed on each side by pillared halls fronted by 11 arched openings, two bays deep on the east, three on the north and the south and five on the west.

The mosque itself is built on a lofty plinth containing arched chambers. The entire roof of the building is covered with 158 small domes, one over each bay of the interior, in addition to three large domes of a symmetrical pattern placed on the roof of the sanctuary.

The interior of the prayer hall has arcades of arches springing from the pillars arranged in a row.

The other famous structures are Jahaz Mahal built in the shape of a ship between two lakes; Hindola Mahal which resembles a swing with its sloping walls; Hoshang Shah's tomb, the first marble structure in India and a forerunner to the Taj; Ashrafi Mahal once the largest building in Mandu; and Baz Bahadur's Palace and Roopmati's Pavilion replete with legend and romance.

AHMEDABAD

Jami Masjid at Ahmedabad (See Holy Places: Mosques) was built by Ahmed Shah I in 1423. The mosque is located in a vast courtyard. A large number of pillars support a cluster of domes. In the interior, tiers of overhanging balconies alternate with groups of columns.

With an imposing central rotunda, the facade is impressive, flanked by two tall minarets.



The rampant lions of Hampi

Siddi Sayyid mosque is a relatively small building but it has intricate open-work screens with detailed graceful carvings of plant life.

SASARAM

The tomb of Sher Shah Suri who wrested the throne from Mughal Emperor Humayun and held it for 15 years is in Sasaram, Bihar. Sher Shah, who had a fondness for the Lodi style of architecture, built this tomb in 1540.

The mausoleum which is octagonal in shape is situated on a high stepped platform in the centre of a lake. Sher Shah's tomb is one of the finest examples of the last stage of Lodi architecture – simple, massive and noble.

TADIPATRI

Tadipatri in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh is known for two temples – Bugga Ramalingeswara (1480) and Chintala Venkataramana (1509-42). Both the temples are richly decorated with animals and inanimate objects. Architecturally these temples show decadence since the Hoysala period. The pillars of these temples are embellished with figures of war-

riors on horse back. While the Venkataramana temple has elaborate sculptures and detailed carvings, Ramalingeswara temple has limited decorative motifs. Mahisasuramardini – Durga in her incarnation as the destroyer of Mahisasura (See Festivals: Hindu) – sculpture on the gopuram of Ramalingeswara temple is notable for style and rhythm of execution.

16th-18th Century AD

HUMAYUN'S TOMB

One of Delhi's finest monuments, Humayun's tomb was built by his widow Haji Begum in the early years of Akbar's reign. The work on the tomb began in 1564 and took eight years to complete.

This mausoleum is an important landmark in the history of building art of the Mughals and heralds a new movement with undertones of Persian inspiration. The tomb with its bulbous dome, arched entrance and neatly laid out, formalised gardens is often referred to as the precursor of the Taj Mahal at Agra.

AGRA

Akbar's tomb at Agra was built by Jehangir between 1612 and 1613. Situated in the midst of a spacious garden, it has four imposing gateways of which the southern gateway has pleasing proportions. Profuse surface ornamentation by way of inlay and four marble minarets, herald the first appearance of this feature in north India.

The tomb itself is a five-storeyed structure in the nature of a truncated pyramid. Architecturally the tomb is not considered perfect. However it is impressive on account of originality of conception and decoration which consists mainly of carvings, paintings in gold and other colours, tile decoration and pleasing inlay work.

The architectural style is that of Akbar's reign. It continued throughout Jehangir's rule though some of the vitality which characterised Akbar's buildings seems to have been lost (See History: Dynasties).

FATEHPUR SIKRI

The city of Fatehpur Sikri 36 km west of Agra in Uttar Pradesh was constructed by Akbar in 1571 and was his capital for 12

years (See History: Dynasties). It is a city of gateways bastioned by walls on three sides, 11 km in circumference, the fourth being protected by a lake. The Jami Masjid which is considered to be the glory of Fatehpur Sikri was conceived on a vast and impressive scale.

To celebrate his victory over the Deccan, Akbar constructed a triumphal archway on the southern entrance to the Jami Masjid (See Holy Places: Mosques). The Buland Darwaza is 40 m high from the terraced platform to the 40 m finial.

An important monument here is the tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti (See Sages and Saints), who had prophesied that Fatehpur Sikri would be auspicious for Akbar who would be blessed with two sons. The small tomb, with a wealth of detail, is constructed in marble. It is even today a place of pilgrimage. Fatehpur Sikri combines the architectural styles of India, central Asia and Iran.

TAJ MAHAL

One of the most exquisite monuments in the world, the Taj was built by Shah Jahan (See History: Dynasties) as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Designed by Ustad Isa Afandi of Turkey, 20,000 workmen worked day and night to complete the monument in 17 years. The cost of the building has been estimated between 50 lakh and 6 crore rupees.

White marble was brought from Makrana, red sandstone came from Sholapur and Fatehpur Sikri. Precious stones were brought from Tibet (turquoise), Yemen (agate), Sri Lanka (lapis lazuli), China (jade and crystals), Persia (onyx and amethyst).

The builders for the dome came from Samarkhand. Mosaic workers came from Baghdad and Kanauj and calligraphists were brought in from Shiraz.

The Taj Mahal stands on a quadrangle 564 m × 302 m. The central area which forms the tomb proper stands in the middle of a black and white marble terrace 95 m square. The principal dome is about 26 m in height and has a diameter of 17.7 m. The walls are about 30 m in height. The lofty dome rises to 74 m above ground level and has a special acoustic quality. When a note is played on a flute in the chamber of the tombs, it reverberates five times.

The archway is inscribed with passages from the *Quran*. Within the tomb, the two cenotaphs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal are surrounded by a magnificent 1.8 m high marble filigree screen.

MAUSOLEUM OF RABIA-UD-DAURANI

The tomb of Aurangzeb's queen Rabia-ud-Daurani is located in Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Erected in 1679, it is an imitation of the Taj Mahal, though on a much smaller scale. By this time Mughal architecture and composition had rapidly deteriorated.

CHARMINAR

One of the most magnificent structures of the Qutub Shahi dynasty of Deccan the Charminar in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, was built to commemorate the end of a plague epidemic in 1591 with the gateway designed as a stately entrance. The Charminar, which measures 30 m square, consists of one central square structure with lofty arched openings on the side. It has a mosque on its upper floor. Four graceful minars adorn the corners. On the top of the roof between these minars, a double screen of arched openings brings symmetry to the whole structure.

The Charminar is outstanding for the perfect balance of the minarets and the elegance of decorative detail.

BOMJESU

Located in old Goa, the Church of Bom Jesu enshrines the body of St. Francis Xavier (See Holy Places: Churches). The periodical exposition of the body of the saint is an important international event.

The architecture of the church shows the preferences of the Portuguese for the Baroque and Gothic. The interior of the church is simple. The only decorations are the gilded altars and the silver casket in which St. Xavier is buried.

LEPAKSHI

Lepakshi in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh is a complex of three large temples. It was built by Virupanna, a treasurer during the reign of Achyutaraya of Vijayanagar in the 16th century.

Lepakshi has several Shiva temples like Raghunatheswara, Virabhadreswara, Papanatheswara, and Agastyeswara. They are built in a single complex divided into different cells.

Lepakshi is known more for the mural paintings on the ceiling than for the usual technique of pillars typical of Vijayanagar architecture. The paintings which reflect contemporary society are now in decay (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

About 1.5 km from the temple of Papanatheswara, is a large monolithic decorative granite bull. It is considered to be the largest in south India. Its sculpture shows the Hoyasala influence on Vijayanagara art (See History: Dynasties).

VELLORE

The well-preserved fortress at Vellore is representative of the Vijayanagar style of architecture of the 16th century. It was built by Chinna Bomma Nayak, a Nayak king under the Vijayanagar emperors (See History: Dynasties).

There is also a well-preserved Shiva temple within the fortress distinguished by the rayagopuram at the entrance and a number of subsidiary shrines.

HYDERABAD

Makka Masjid, constructed in the orthodox style is located in Hyderabad. Construction was begun by Muhammad Qutub Shah in 1617 and was continued by his successors, Abullah and Abul Hasan. It could however be completed only in 1693 by Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb (See History: Dynasties). The building measures 65.5 m × 55 m and has a front courtyard which measures 110 m on each side. Built entirely of stone masonry, the mosque consists of a spacious prayer hall three bays deep, overlooking a square terraced court whose facade is formed by five arches of large dimensions. The mosque has a domed ceiling. Makka Masjid represents the Golconda style of architecture notable for the highly ornamental minar work.

ITIMAD-UD-DAULA

Jehangir's queen Nur Jahan had a tomb built for her father Itimad-ud-Daula during 1626-27 at Agra. Made entirely of marble and decorated profusely with *pietra dura* inlay work, it forms a link between the styles of Akbar and Shah Jahan (See History: Dynasties).

The square tomb has a central chamber enclosed by connected rooms with three arched openings in each side and four broad and squat octagonal and round towers at corners. A square partition in the centre on the terrace has finely trellised marble screens.

Often called mini Taj Mahal because of the marble construction and fine inlay work, Itimad-ud-Daula's tomb is likened to a jewel box and though it lacks the refinement and exquisite proportions of the Taj Mahal, it is nevertheless a charming building.

RED FORT

The Red Fort in Delhi completed in 1648 was constructed by Shah Jahan (See History: Dynasties). The fort is an imposing structure encircling massive walls, broken at intervals by projecting bastions topped by domed kiosks. Planned in the shape of a parallelogram with its angles slightly centered off, it measures 975 m × 487 m without the gateways. Entrance to the fort



The Charminar, a Hyderabad landmark.

was through two gates – the Delhi Gate and the Lahori Gate. Of the existing buildings in the fort, the important ones are the Diwan-i-Am, the Mumtaz Mahal, the Rang Mahal, the Diwan-i-Khas, the Kherabagh and the Hammam.

The palace buildings are distinguished by symmetrical planning along an ornamental marble water canal with chutes and cascades. Structurally the buildings are representative of late Mughal art. Workmanship of the highest order marks decorations of different styles – *pietra dura*, low-relief marble carving in arabesque and flowers and paintings in brilliant colours. The Diwan-i-Khas is the most richly embellished and lavishly ornamented structure.

A remarkable feature is the throne-seat, a white marble canopied pavilion-like structure in the vaulted recess in the back wall of the Diwan-i-Am. Richly inlaid with precious stones, it was intended for the royal throne. A well-known European artist Austin de Bordeaux is said to have decorated the wall of the throne.

GOL GUMBAD OR GUMBAZ

The Gol Gumbad which was built as a mausoleum for Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-

56) during his own lifetime, is situated in Bijapur within a walled enclosure containing other buildings. It is famous for its hemispherical dome, 2.8 m in diameter, the largest in the world and its whispering gallery (See Holy Places: Mosques – Jami Masjid, Bijapur).

The interior of the mausoleum which houses the tombs of Muhammad Adil Shah his wife, daughter and a favourite court dancer, is a simple large vaulted hall on which the dome has been supported by arches.

The 3.3 m wide whispering gallery under the dome is a marvel of acoustic engineering. The slightest whisper is magnified and carries 75 m and is echoed over and over making it one of the most mysterious whispering galleries in the world. The dome is built on walls three metres thick with not a single supporting pillar, an architectural feat almost as magnificent as the dome of St. Peter's in Rome.

JAMI MASJID

Jami Masjid in Delhi, considered to be the largest (9290 sq m) and most eminent of the mosques in India, was built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan during 1650-56 (See

Holy Places: Mosques). Built on orthodox mosque plan on a lofty basement about 9 m high, it has steps leading to imposing gateways on three sides of a 100 sq m courtyard. At its four corners are twelve-pillared kiosks surmounted by marble domes. The prayer hall measures 61 m × 27.5 m. Its facade has 11 multifoil arches. There are two minarets each rising to a height of about 40 m. The prayer hall has three domes built of striped black and white marble.

KHAS MAHAL

The Agra fort was built in the 17th century and is a magnificent tribute to Mughal architecture. The double castellated walls stretching in a curve about 2.4 km on the Jamuna enclose the fortress. Each rampart had a sentry path flanked with towers and bastions. There were four gates with drawbridges. The one used today is the Amar Singh Rathore north gate. The fortress has statues of two Rajput heroes – Jaimal of Badnor and Pata of Kelwa who were 15 and 16 when they were killed in action fighting Akbar (See History: Dynasties).

Within the fortress lie the Palace of Jehangir, Khas Mahal and Sheesh Mahal.



The Baha'i Temple, New Delhi

The Khas Mahal was built by Shah Jahan in 1637 and has three buildings overlooking the river. The central building made of white marble opens to the outside through five radial arcades supporting a marble roof with two pagodas.

The Sheesh Mahal is a hall of convex mirrors. The octagonal tower or Musamman Burj on the same level as Khas Mahal is a room surrounded by screens of filigreed marble. Shah Jahan was confined here from 1658 till his death in 1666.

MOTI MASJID

Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque (See Holy Places: Mosques) was part of the interior renovation of the fortress of Agra and was built between 1646 and 1653 using pure Makrana marble from Rajasthan. The mosque and other buildings like the Diwan-i-Khas and royal apartments built in or around the same time were decorated profusely with gold and silver and encrusted with precious stones. The gold and precious stones have long disappeared, yet Moti Masjid remains among the most elegant mosques ever rebuilt.

17th-18th Century AD

SUCHINDRAM

Suchindram (See Holy Places: Temples), 12 km north-west of Kanyakumari is dedicated to Trimurti and locally called Sthanumalayapperumal temple. Over 30 shrines are located in the temple compound whose walls measure 122 m × 71 m. Noteworthy for precision of workmanship are the musical pillars of the Kalabhairava temple within the compound. Other sculptures include the Nandi bull in the Rishabha Mandapa and a 2.1 m monolithic statue of Hanuman.

Architecturally, many features of the temple recall the late Nayaka work in several temples of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, though Pandyas, Cholas, Vijayanagar kings and Travancore rulers have added to the embellishments of the temple (See History: Dynasties). Though the present construction relates to the 17th and 18th centuries, the temple was known to exist as early as in 9th century.

IMAMBARA

The major monument in the Avadh style, the Imambara was built by Asadud-Daula in

UP in 1784 as a famous relief project. A single-storeyed structure, it is remarkable for its dimensions and for the skill displayed in the construction of its interior. The large vaulted hall 49 m × 16 m and 15 m high, has large underground chambers. The vaulted hall is considered to be the largest of its kind in India.

The entrance to the Imambara, called Rumi Darwaza is massive. Fronting a huge alcove and lavishly ornamented and relieved by pilasters, the structure is remarkable for the balance of proportions and variety of design. The Bhul Bhulayya or maze is the largest in India.

20th Century AD

BAHA'I HOUSE OF WORSHIP

The Baha'i House of Worship (See Holy Places) the first in Asia, is situated in New Delhi on a 10 hectare plot. Constructed at the cost of 10 crores during 1980 and 1986, the structure resembles a blossoming lotus. It has three folds of nine concrete petals, each covered outside with marble from Greece, finished in Italy. The structure rises to a height of 35 m from the ground.

BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE

MONASTERIES

Fahien, the Chinese traveller mentions the existence of two relics of Buddha in Ladakh – one, a spittoon used by Buddha; the second, a tooth of Buddha, over which a stupa was built.

In Ladakh today, the gumphas or monasteries are the most prominent buildings. The oldest and most renowned monastery is the Hemis Gumpha, situated about 35 km to the south east of Leh. Another monastery at Lamayarn, about 90 km from Leh has a colossal image of Avalokiteswara with eleven heads and a thousand hands. A similar statue is found in Sankar Gumpha near Leh, which is probably the only monastery built on level plain in Ladakh. Other well-known monasteries are in Spituk, Rezong, Deskit and Samur (See Religion: Buddhism).

STUPAS

The first Buddhist monument on Sanchi hill located about 8 km from Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh dates back to the time of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. (See History: Dynasties). Sanchi, which is about 100 m above sea level, though not one of the major spots associated with Buddha, has a romantic association. When Ashoka was viceroy at Ujjain he married the beautiful daughter of a merchant prince. Their son was Mahendra.

The principal stupa or the Great Stupa, has a large hemispherical dome topped with a small balcony surrounded by three umbrellas. The Sunga kings added a stone casing to the original structure while building stupa 2 and 3. The Satavahana kings added elaborately carved 'torans' or gateways to stupas 1 and 3. While the Great Stupa is plain and simple, the artistic work is confined to 'torans' (See History: Dynasties).

There are scenes from the *Jataka* tales (See Literature: Pali) and events from Ashoka's life. The symbolic representation of Buddha is the special characteristic here as Buddha had not been pictorially depicted till much later.

Stupa 2 yielded the bodily relics of Buddhist masters such as Kasapagota and Vachhiya, Suvijaya among others. Stupa 3, well-known for its relics, is inscribed with the names of Sariputta and Mahamuggaralana, the foremost disciples of Buddha. During the Gupta period, other stupas were also added.



Ladakhi Buddhist Monastery



Fatehpur Sikri

OLD CITIES

AMARAVATI

Amaravati, near Guntur in Andhra Pradesh has a well-known Buddhist stupa known as Amaravati stupa. Initially built in the 2nd century BC it was later expanded by Nagarjuna (See History: Dynasties). Episodes from the life of Buddha have been sculpted on the railings of the stupa.

ANGA

During the *Mahabharata* era Anga-Vanga was the country given to Karna by Duryodhana to rule over (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). Today one could approximate it to east Bihar, around the districts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur.

ARBUDACHALA

Referred to in the *Mahabharata* it is today the hill resort Mount Abu in Rajasthan. According to legend Arbuda was the son of the Mountain Himavanta. Whoever spent a night on the mountain was given punya (merit) equivalent to gifting a thousand cows to a Brahmin. It is believed that sage Vishwamitra performed a fire sacrifice (yajna) here out of which four warrior families – Chauhan, Parihar, Solanki and Parmar emerged to destroy the demons.

BHARHUT

An ancient Buddhist site near Satna in Madhya Pradesh, which had a great stupa at one time built in the 3rd century BC and renovated in the Sunga period (See History: Dynasties). The remains of the stupa are now in various museums in the country, particularly Calcutta. Various episodes from the life of Buddha are sculpted on the railings and torana gates of the stupa. (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture – Sunga Period).

BODH GAYA

It was here in Bihar, about 10 km from Gaya that the Buddha attained supreme wisdom (See Holy Places; Philosophy; Religion: Buddhism). The Mahabodhi temple still stands amongst the ancient ruins.

DAKSHINAPATHA

The region of the Narmada river was known as Dakshinapatha in ancient times. The dense forest of Dandakaranya, where Rama spent his years of exile, was located in this region (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana). Buddhist literature mentions a dance guru and his beautiful daughter Kuvalya of Dakshinapatha. The people of this region were considered expert dancers.

FATEHPUR SIKRI

This splendid city was constructed by Akbar in 1571 as his capital. Concerned that he had no heirs, the emperor went to Sheikh Salim Chisti who prophesied that he would be blessed with two sons (See Holy Places: Mosques). When his elder son Salim was born, he ordered the construction of the city. Some magnificent edifices still preserved are Panch Mahal, Diwan-i-Am, Palace of Jodhabai, Diwan-i-Khas, the Jami Masjid and a gigantic gate – Buland Darwaza. The most outstanding of them all is the marble monument (tomb) of the Saint Salim Chisti which is holy to people of all faiths (See Sages and Saints).

HASTINAPURA

The famous capital of the Kuru dynasty (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). Today it is identified with a village of the same name in the Meerut district of UP. The city has been described in most glorious terms in the epic.

KANCHIPURAM

A holy city of Tamil Nadu, now one of the seats of the Shankaracharya, it was one of the seven ancient cities of India and the capital city of the Pallavas, Cholas and the Rayas of Vijayanagara for centuries (See History: Dynasties). The Pallava king,



Mahendra Varman wrote a farce, *Mattavilasa Prahasana* in which he described the glory of the city.

During the 7th and 8th centuries the Pallavas built some of the most magnificent temples in Kanchi which may be seen to this day (See History: Dynasties).

KONARAK

Once an important sea port on the coast of Orissa, the massive Sun temple (for which the town is now known) was built in the 13th century in the reign of the Eastern Ganga King Narasimhasena I (See Holy Places: Temples).

KURUKSHETRA

The famous battlefield where the *Mahabharata* was fought now lies in Haryana state. During a solar eclipse a bath in the sacred tank of Sanyahet is considered very auspicious. There is a temple dedicated to Kali and another associated with the Pandavas and Kauravas (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). Close to Kurukshetra is Jotisar where Krishna is believed to have narrated the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna.

LUMBINI

Rummindei in the Nepalese terai region is believed to be Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha. An Ashoka pillar bears an inscription that Buddha was born here (See Religion: Buddhism).

NAGARJUNAKONDA

On the hills of the Nagarjuna by the bank of the river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh, this was once the seat of the Ishvaku dynasty and called Vijayapuri. The town had a Buddhist mahastupa built in the reign of Ashoka. It is now in ruins.

NALANDA

Nagarjuna, a Buddhist scholar established a university at Nalanda, Bihar, in the 4th century. This flourished till the 13th century when invading Muslims destroyed it. Chinese pilgrims like Huiyen Tsang and I-tsing have paid glowing tributes to the university, having lived there as students in the 7th century.

PATTADAKAL

A temple city on the bank of the Malaprabha in Karnataka. The Chalukya kings of Badami constructed a number of these beautiful temples in the 7th and 8th centuries. The oldest of these temples is the Shiva temple, Sangameshwara, built by King Vijayaditya. The temples of Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna were built by King Vikramaditya II for his queens after his victory over the Pallava capital city, Kanchi (See History: Dynasties; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). All these temples are known for their sculpture and architecture.

SANGHOL

A village in Punjab locally known as Ucha Pind was the site of a beautiful Buddhist stupa in the early Christian era. Recent excavations have revealed fascinating sculptures that were once part of the stupa all belonging to the Mathura School of the Kushana period (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). It is also the first time that sculpture of this school has been found at a place so far away from Mathura.

SARNATH

Buddha first preached his doctrine at the Deer Park of Sarnath. It was here that Ashoka raised his first sculpted pillar to Buddhism – the bell-shaped inverted lotus on an abacus with a frieze carrying sculptures of four lions back to back in a group in high relief. The top was crowned with the Dharma-chakra or the Wheel of Law. This is now in the Sarnath Museum. The national emblem of India is an adaptation of this pillar.

SURAJ KUND

This little town in Haryana was named after a magnificent tank, built in 688 by Suraj Pal, surrounded by tiered stone steps, rather like an amphitheatre. There probably was a temple to the Sun god near the tank.



THE COSMOS

Antariksh

There is a strong belief
that the time of birth, death, marriage, children,
everything in our lives
is ordained by the movement of the planets.

The days of the month,
the major and minor astrological events of the year
are recorded in a *panchangam*,
the calendar that most Hindus follow to fix
marriages or avoid inauspicious days...

ASTROLOGY

Astrology is more a strong cultural belief than an exact science as the West understands science. But in India, it cannot be dismissed as merely the art of fortune-telling. Hindus believe that it is a divine science, a gift of the gods. Astrology is a branch of the Vedas (Vedanga) with the aid of which it is possible to forecast the future and probe all past events by considering the position of the planets at the time of birth. Astrology has three broad divisions: Siddhanta, which deals with the astronomical side of the science, Samhita, which deals with world events and Hora which has to do with the horoscope of human and animate objects. Our sages, it is believed, with their spiritual powers, had direct contact with Brahma and were initiated into science. Among the sages associated with astrology are Varahamihira, Kalidasa, Varunchi, Vasishta, Vyasa, Parashara, Venkatesa, Kashyapa, Neelakantha, Jayadeva, Ganapati, Satyacharya, Manitha, Jeeva Sharma, Aryabhatta and Bhaskaracharya.

GRAHA'S

Nine grahas or planets influence the earth—Ravi, Surya (Sun), Chandra, Soma (Moon), Mangala, Kuja (Mars), Buddha, Soumya (Mercury), Guru, Brahaspati (Jupiter), Sukra, Bhrigu (Venus), Sani, Manda (Saturn), Rahu or Sarpa and Ketu or Sikhi. Rahu and Ketu are known as shadowy planets (chhaya graha) since they do not have physical or celestial bodies like the other planets. The north point where the moon crosses the elliptic (the path of the sun) is called Rahu and the south point, Ketu. Despite their inferior status among planets, these two chhaya grahas have a powerful influence.



The Zodiac

ZODIAC

The Zodiac is a broad celestial belt extending to about nine degrees on each side of the ecliptic which is the path of the sun which passes through the centre of the Zodiac. The Zodiac circle of 360 degrees is divided into 12 parts of 30 degrees each. Each one of these parts is known as a sign or a rasi. The Zodiac revolves on its axis once a day from east to west.

LAGNA

There are 12 signs of the Zodiac, that go round the earth once in 24 hours. Each of these signs or rasis takes two hours to rise—this ascendance is called lagna. For instance if the rasi Simha is on the rise, the two-hour period is called 'Simha Lagna'. A person's lagna is determined by the rasi that has risen at the exact time of his birth. In a horoscope the lagna of a person is called the first house.

NAKSHATRAS

Lit. stars. While there are 12 rasis, the Zodiac is further marked by 27 constellations or nakshatras. Like the rasis, the nakshatras are owned by the various planets including Rahu and Ketu. The 27 nakshatras are Ashwini, Bharani, Kritika, Rohini, Mrigasira, Arudra, Punarvasu, Pushyami, Ashlesha, Makha, Poorva Phalguni, Uttara Phalguni, Hasta, Chitra, Swati, Visakha, Anuradha, Jyestha, Moola, Poorva Ashada, Uttara Ashada, Sravan, Dhanishta, Satabisha, Poorva Bhadra, Uttara Bhadra, Revati.

RASIS

The Zodiac or Bhachakra is divided into 12 rasis (signs): Mesha (Aries), Vrishabha (Taurus), Mithuna (Gemini), Kataka, Karkataka or Karka (Cancer), Simha (Leo), Kanya (Virgo), Tula (Libra), Vrishchika (Scorpio), Dhanus, Dhanur or Dhanu (Sagittarius), Makara (Capricorn), Kumbha (Aquarius) and Meena (Pisces).

RASI—GRAHA

The 12 rasis are owned by seven planets, Rahu and Ketu not owning any.

RASI	SYMBOL	GRAHA
Mesha	Ram	Mangala
Vrishabha	Bull	Sukra
Mithuna	Twins	Buddha
Kataka	Crab	Chandra
Simha	Lion	Surya
Kanya	Virgin	Budha
Tula	Balance	Sukra
Vrishchika	Scorpion	Mangala
Dhanu	Centaur	Guru
Makara	Crocodile	Shani
Kumbha	Water carrier	Shani
Meena	Fish	Guru

YOGAS

Just as there are 27 nakshatras (constellations) there are also 27 yogas. These yogas (not to be confused with Yoga meditation exercise) have not been given any significance in predictive astrology except that birth in certain yogas is considered auspicious while in others it is not so. Every nakshatra has a corresponding yoga and each yoga has its own attributes.

THE CALENDAR

The Hindu calendar is marked by ritus (seasons), solar months, lunar months, pakshas and tithis.

Hindus follow the lunar calendar which is based on the waxing and waning of the moon. The month is divided into two, with the two fortnights termed Krishna Paksha and Shukla Paksha. (For corresponding Gregorian months see further under Lunar Months). The Hijri calendar of the Muslims is also lunar, but the cycle can so vary, that for instance, the holy month of Ramzan may fall in summer, one year, and in winter, a few years hence.

Hindu

LUNAR MONTHS

There are 12 lunar months. The name of each lunar month is given according to the constellation falling on the full moon day of the particular month. While the solar month extends 30 to 31 days (time taken by the Sun to traverse a rasi), the lunar month is of 27 to 29 days. During this period the moon, the fastest moving planet, travels along all the 12 rasis of the Zodiac. The 12 lunar months are – Chaitra (March-April), Vaisakh (April-May), Jyestha (May-June), Ashada (June-July), Sravana (July-August), Bhadra (Aug- Sept), Ashwin (Sept-Oct), Kartik (Oct-Nov), Margashira (Nov-Dec), Pausa (Dec-Jan), Magha (Jan- Feb) and Phalgun (Feb-March).

PAKSHAS

The waxing and waning of the moon is of great significance in the Hindu calendar. The ascending period of 15 days from the new moon day (Amavasya) to the full moon day (Purnima or Purnamasi) is known as Shukla Paksha, the bright period. The other 15 days when the moon is waning or is in its descendancy are known as Krishna Paksha; this is the dark half of the lunar month. Shukla Paksha is regarded as most auspicious by Hindu astrologers and as far as possible important rites and ceremonies are slated to take place during this period.

RITUS

Lit. seasons. The Hindu calendar lists six seasons: Vasanta (corresponding roughly to spring), Greeshma (summer), Varsha (monsoon), Sharad (autumn), Hemanta (pre-winter) and Sisir (winter).



The Rasis

SOLAR MONTHS

A solar month begins from the date the sun enters a particular rasi (See Lagna). As there are 12 rasis, there are also 12 solar months.

	From 20th to 19th
Mesha	(April – May)
Vrishabha	(May – June)
Mithuna	(June – July)
Kataka	(July – Aug)
Simha	(Aug – Sept)
Kanya	(Sept – Oct)
Tula	(Oct – Nov)
Vrischika	(Nov – Dec)
Dhanu	(Dec – Jan)
Makara	(Jan – Feb)
Kumbha	(Feb – Mar)
Meena	(Mar – April)

The dates of the solar months given here are only approximate. In actual practice the dates vary by a day or two on either side each year.

TITHIS

Each of the 30 days in a lunar month is a tithi. The new moon day is the first tithi and Amavasya is the 30th tithi. But in common usage the new moon day is the first tithi of Shukla Paksha and the 15th day of Shukla Paksha is Purnima. Then instead of calling the 16th lunar day the 16th tithi, we call it the first tithi of Krishna Paksha (See Pakshas) and so on till the Amavasya is the 15th tithi of Krishna Paksha. The 30 lunar days again in actual practice may be equal to 27 to 29 solar days. The tithis are Prathama, Dwitiya, Tiritiya, Chaturthi, Panchami, Sashthi, Saptami, Ashtami, Navami, Dashami, Ekadashi, Dwadashi, Trayodashi, Chaturdashi, Purnima (or Amavasya). All these tithis have auspicious significance in particular months (See Festivals; Religion: Hinduism – Rituals, Ceremonies).

Hijri

The Muslim calendar is lunar-based and the Hijri era begins from 622 AD when the Prophet Mohammed left Mecca for Yathrib or Medina. The sighting of the new moon by three reliable witnesses every 30th day is the signal for the imams of important mosques to declare the start of a new month. If the moon is sighted on the 29th day itself, that month will not have a 30th day. Instead the new month begins on that day. This calendar therefore cannot correspond with the Gregorian. The holy month of Ramzan, for instance, may occur in summer one year and in winter some years later.

MUHARRAM – From the 1st to 10th is the mourning period for Shias. The 9th evening is called 'Sham-e-ghariba,' the eve of the next day's battle in which the Shia martyrs were killed.

SAFAR – Its 20th day marks the end of the 40 day mourning for ancestors that begins on the 11th day of Muharram. This period is called Chhelum.

RABI-UL-AWWAL – On the 12th day falls the Prophet Mohammed's birthday, 'Id-ul-Milad-un-Nabi.'

RABI-US-SANI

JAMAT-UL-AWWAL

JAMAT-US-SANI – The 20th day is the birthday of the Prophet's daughter, Syeda (Fatima), who is invoked for protection on journeys, for new ventures, to find lost property or against illness.

RAJAB – The 13th is Hazrat Ali's birthday.

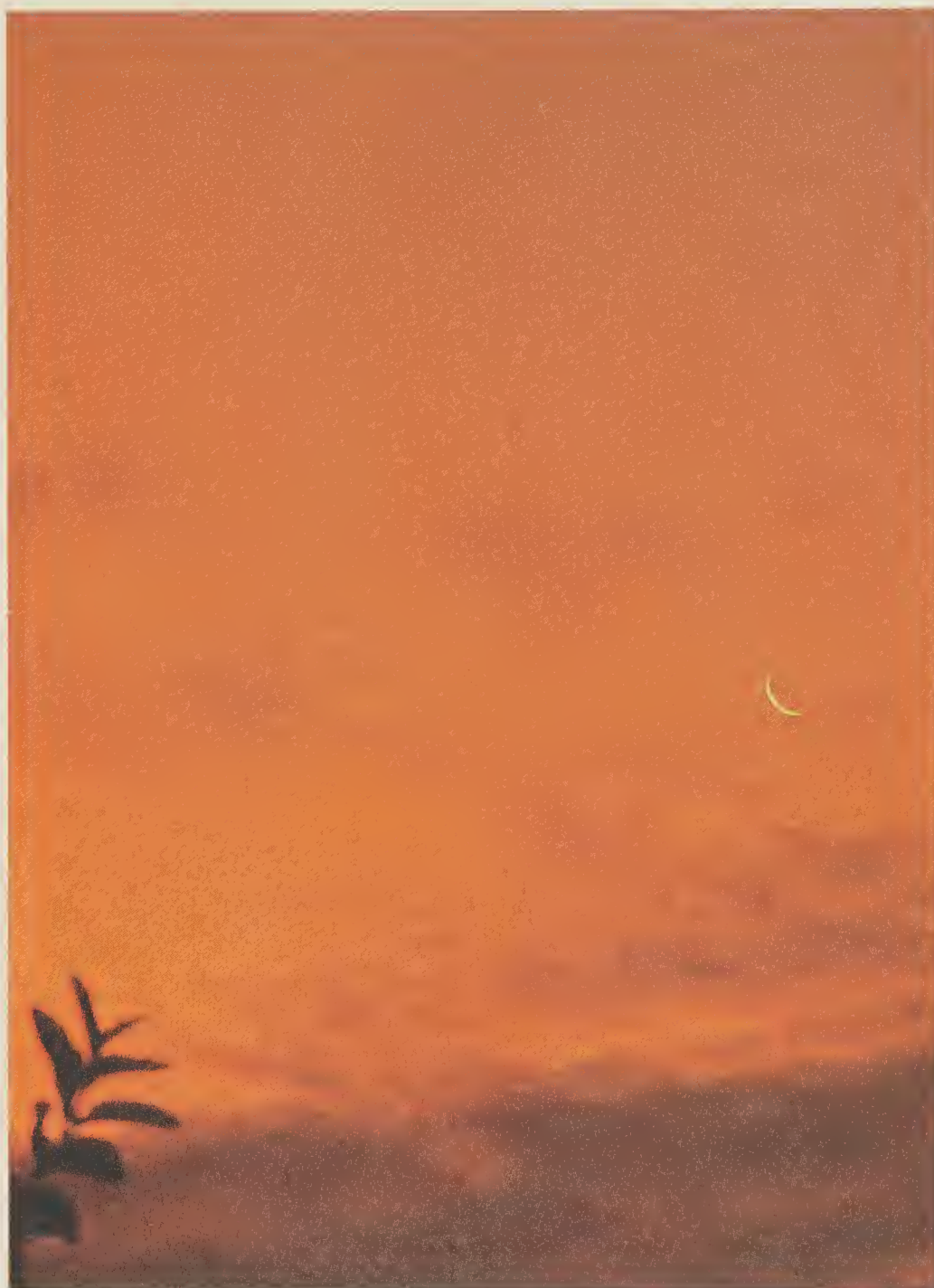
SHAHBAN

RAMZAN – The holy month, on which roza (a day-long fast) is observed every day, with not even a drop of water. It is broken at sunset with a ceremonial meal, iftar.

SHAWWAL – The first day of Shawwal is Id-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramzan.

ZIQAT

ZILHIJ – The 10th day is Id-uz-Zoha.



Sighting the new moon



FESTIVALS

Utsava

Enriched by so many cultural and ethnic groups, India's festival calendar is full of events every month to mark the seasons in historical remembrance or simply in thanksgiving

With the diversities built into its cultural fabric, India probably has more festivals than any other country. While festivals are of great religious importance, their social significance is equally vital. Festivals celebrate the joy of life with singing and dancing, fasting and feasting (See Religion). The different festivals appear under their religion in a chronological order as they occur according to the Gregorian calendar, except for Muslim festivals which do not follow it (See Cosmos: Calendar – Hijri).

BUDDHIST

The three highest ideals for Buddhists are triratnas (three gems) – Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (See Religion: Buddhism). They worship Buddha images in temples or in religious ceremonies in their homes. They recite in the Pali language the prose passages and verses from scriptures praising the three gems. Sometimes the scriptures are translated into local languages also (See Religion: Buddhism). This is the practice especially in the Theravada countries. In the Mahayana countries also, the 'three gems' are equally venerated, but the Pali language is not used for recitation. Buddhists offer three articles – flowers, candles and incense, in the worship of the image of the Buddha. These represent the three ideals Buddha, Dharma and Sangha respectively.

BUDDHA PURNIMA

A major Buddhist festival (April or May) commemorating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death all of which took place on the full moon night of Vaishakh. In India it is celebrated in important Buddhist temples. It is a national holiday and prayer meetings are held. Non-Buddhists often participate in the congregations.

In some countries both the full moon days of Vaisakh are auspicious whereas in other countries each and every full moon day is regarded auspicious and the laity flock to temples for religious sermons and pujas.

Several anniversaries of events in the life of the Buddha are celebrated in different parts of the Buddhist world. They include the anniversaries of the first sermon at the Deer Park at Sarnath near Varanasi, known as Dharma Chakra Day and his descent from the Tusita heaven where,



Celebration at Ladakh

according to tradition, the Buddha spent the rainy season after his enlightenment and preached Abhidharma or higher dharma to his mother.

KAZA FESTIVAL

A Ladakhi summer festival, also called Tsheshu. Celebrated with dances in June on the 10th day of the fifth Buddhist month at Hemis Gompa near Leh, the capital of Ladakh, the main centre of Lamaism in India. The dancers wear masks to frighten away evil spirits. The festival, which lasts about three days, joyously celebrates the birth anniversary of the great Buddhist patriarch, Padmasambhava, who is considered the founder of Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism. The Dalai Lama is also worshipped as a living incarnation of Lord Buddha.

PILGRIMAGE

A Buddhist must visit holy places associated with the chief events of Gautama Buddha's life. They are Lumbini, the birthplace, in Nepal; Bodh Gaya, the place of enlightenment; Sarnath, where the Buddha delivered his first sermon, and Kushinagara, the place of the Buddha's Mahaparinirvana or passing away. In the *Mahaparinirvana Sutta*, the Buddha recommended that his devotees visit these places to cultivate detachment and religious feeling.

Devotion to the Sangha is expressed by laymen in external acts of reverence and material support in the form of dana or offerings of food and other daily requisites of monks. It is a common scene in Buddhist countries to see saffron-robed monks in the early morning with their begging-bowls, walking steadily and silently from house to house, and standing for a few minutes at each door to receive alms, given gladly by the laity.

STUPA OR CHAITYA PUJA

The worship of mounds or stupas is an important Buddhist ceremony (See Archaeology/Architecture). The stupa enshrines a portion of the bone relics of the Buddha. Veneration of stupas of various shapes, sizes and materials is a special feature of Asian Buddhism and is observed in almost all Buddhist countries. Image-worship, although introduced later, approximately five centuries after the Buddha's death, is a popular feature of Buddhist ceremonies.

WORSHIP OF THE BODHI TREE

Another feature which is equally popular is the worship of Bodhi tree (Pipal or *Ficus religiosa*). The Bodhi tree is worshipped by decorating the branches of the tree with flower garlands and coloured flags, by lighting rows of lamps and by sprinkling milk and scented water on the roots of the tree.

CHRISTIAN

ASH WEDNESDAY

Marks the beginning of Lent (Feb-March), the 40 day period of purification and penance, culminating with the celebration of Easter. It recalls the 40 days in which Jesus fasted in the desert before he began to preach. The name comes from the practice of worshippers smearing ashes on their head as a symbol of repentance.

HOLY WEEK

Commemorating the last seven days of Jesus' mortal life (March-April). Its most important days are : Sunday, Monday, Thursday and Good Friday. This week of austerity, meditation and prayer finally ends with Easter Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY

Recalls the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when he was greeted with the waving of palm fronds, five days before he was crucified. Many places stage ceremonial palm waving processions.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The day of Jesus' Last Supper with his twelve apostles in which he washed their feet and instituted the Eucharist (that evolved into the Communion service, in which bread is broken and shared).

GOOD FRIDAY

The memory of the passion and death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, spent in fasting, sermon and prayer.

EASTER SUNDAY

The most important celebration of the year, it recalls the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and the establishment of god's kingdom of love and forgiveness. A day of great joy and exchange of good wishes among Christians.

ASCENSION

Commemorates the Thursday after Easter Sunday (Resurrection) when Christ's disciples saw him being raised in body and spirit to heaven.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Fifty days after Easter, it celebrates the beginning of the Christian Church by a special experience of the spirit of god by the disciples of Jesus, giving rise to the concept of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. Later disciples formulated the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity or three aspects of god's mysterious being – the Father (God), Son (Christ) and Holy Ghost (the unity of Father and Son).



Christmas with Santa Claus

ST. THOMAS

(Celebrated on 3rd July or 6th October but the variation in dates is not clear). On this day Christians, especially from Kerala and Tamil Nadu celebrate the memory of one of Christ's original 12 disciples (apostles), St. Thomas, who is believed to have come to preach the gospel in south India. His tomb (Santhome) is venerated in Madras (See Archaeology/Architecture).

ASSUMPTION OF MARY

A feast especially celebrated by Catholics to honour Mary, the mother of Jesus, who they believe was taken from the dead to heavenly glory with Her son. In India it coincides with 15th August, Independence Day.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

Most days of the year Christians remember some special saint of the Christian tradition. But on this day (1st November), all saints are honoured in many churches, with prayers and feasting.

ALL SOULS' DAY

2nd November, a day on which Christians remember their dead with visits and prayers to the cemetery. Graves are blessed and adorned with candles and flowers, to signify the hope of all human souls of mercy on Judgement Day.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S DAY

Celebrated on 3rd December specially in Goa in honour of the 16th century Euro-

pean preacher who gave Christianity a new thrust in India. His remains are venerated in the Church of Bom Jesu (Good Jesus) at Panjim, Goa (See Holy Places: Churches; Religion: Christianity).

CHRISTMAS

The best known, most popular Christian festival celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ on 25th December. Many European customs have been adopted in India for this festival – cards, Christmas trees, special family dinners, carol singing and midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. The custom of building a 'Nativity' or a crib tableau to depict the sacred birth is a perfect parallel to the nativity tableaux (Jhanki) of Krishna made for his (Krishna's) birthday, Janmashtami, in August, complete with cradle, stable and cattle. East European and west Asian churches often celebrate the feast on 6th January as the manifestation (Epiphany) of Christ.

HINDU

Though festivals of all religions are celebrated in India, Hindu festivals dominate in sheer number. Festivals happen all year round, to mark, besides mytho-historical events, the changing seasons. Each one of these gives a new meaning to the cycle of life and death. Hindu festivals follow the lunar calendar (See Cosmos: Calendar).

BAISAKHI

A thanksgiving harvest festival, (falling on 13th April) in north India, especially in Punjab, when the rabi crop is ready to be gathered. Baisakhi or Vaishakhi, from the month Vaisakh (April-May), is celebrated according to the solar, not lunar calendar. Melas or fairs are held on this day with boating, swimming and wrestling bouts on river banks and traditional songs and dances like the Bhangra (for men) and Gidda (for women). Baisakhi is celebrated as New Year's Day in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. This festival is special to Buddhists as the day on which Gautama Buddha was born, enlightened and died. For Sikhs, it was on this day in 1699 that their tenth guru, Gobind Singh, organised the order of the Khalsa. And in 1875, it was on Baisakhi day that Swami Dayanand, a Punjabi Hindu reformer, set up the Arya Samaj (See People: Great Indians). In Bengal, 14th April is celebrated as Naba Barsha, New Year. Baisakhi is thus a festival of tremendous significance across India for three religions and is eagerly looked forward to each year.

UGADI

Lit. 'Yuga Adi' the beginning of the new year, is the New Year festival of Andhra Pradesh. A seasonal, nutritious chutney is specially made from new neem flowers, fresh green mangoes, fresh gur (jaggery from new sugarcane) and new chintakaya (tamarind), the season's first flavours.

GUDI PADVA

Maharashtrian New Year's Day which falls on the same day as Ugadi. Traditionally, a long pole topped with a 'khand' blouse piece with a kalash on top is placed outside the house and worshipped. New clothes, festive food add to the spirit of fun and celebration.

VISHU

Kerala's New Year's day, when greetings



The Jagannatha Rath Yatra at Puri

and gifts are exchanged. An auspicious omen called kani made of coconut, paddy, gold cloth and ornaments and yellow laburnum (*Cassia fistula*) is made in the morning. Vishu falls on the 13th/14th or 15th of April, and is also celebrated in parts of Tamil Nadu. Baisakhi, the north Indian harvest festival falls at the same time (See Nature: Trees/Plants; Religion: Sikhism).

LAI HARA OBA

Lit. the festival of the gods in Meitei, the dialect of the Manipuris, held in the month of Vaisakha (April-May) with some variations at Moirang, Kanglei and Chapka. Religious ceremonies and music, dance and sport blend harmoniously in this festival, which marks the amalgam of Shaivism and pre-18th century tantra cult prevalent in Manipur. The dance is said to be devised by Thoibi, a princess whose love for a young man, Khamba was doomed. The dance (Laipon) re-enacts the wedding of Nongpokningthou (Shiva) and Panthoibi (Parvati). Newly levelled earth is consecrated, symbolising the creation of earth by nine gods, Laipumthou and seven goddesses, Lainuras.

POORAM

Held after Vishu (New Year) in honour of Shiva, in Kerala's temples in April-May, Pooram is celebrated with ceremonial processions of gaily caparisoned elephants. The best known festival is celebrated at Vadakkunatha Swami, Trichur's central Shiva temple. Also special is the Pooram at Vaikkom's Shiva temple. The highlight of the festival is the moment when the elephant bearing the utsava murthy (processional statue) of Kartikeya, Shiva's son, from Udayanapuram temple is made to rush forward to greet the Vaikkom elephant in obeisance.

BHADRAKALI AMMAN FESTIVAL

An eleven day festival in Pondicherry in honour of Bhadrakali Amman, or Parvati, on Ashtami (8th day) of Jyestha (May-June). The legend says that Shiva, Parvati's consort, blessed two demons, Amban and Ambasan with a boon that they would only be killed by a woman. Since they despised women, they proceeded to behave atrociously. Shiva requested Parvati to destroy them and in her form of Uma, she easily did so. The Bhadrakali temple, dedicated to her as the destroyer was built at the place where she vanquished the two demons (See Holy Places: Temples).

GURU PURNIMA

On the full moon (Purnima) of Ashada (June-July), this ancient festival in honour

of the guru Vyasa is observed with fasts and prayers for wisdom. Vyasa is said to have written parts of the *Vedas* and the first version of the *Mahabharata* and compiled the 18 *Puranas* on the banks of the Vipasha (Beas). Vyasa is believed to be a composite identity of several gurus and 'Veda Vyasa' is a name generally applied to Krishna Dwaipayana. He was the son of the fisherwoman-turned-queen, Satyawati and sage Parasara, born before she married king Shantanu (See Myths and Legends: Bhishma; Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata).

JAGANNATHA RATH YATRA

The Jagannatha (Krishna, 'Lord of the world') temple at Puri, Orissa, is one of the four Dhams or most important places of pilgrimage for Vaishnavas (See Religion: Hinduism). Krishna, his elder brother Balarama and sister Subhadra, are worshipped as an unusual trinity. Their images are highly stylised. Legend has it that they are incomplete because their creator, Vishwakarma, was disturbed at work by a curious king. The wooden images are changed by a blindfolded priest every now and then, in a mystic rite of renewal. On the full moon of Ashada (June-July), the images are taken out in procession in enormous raths or chariots, attracting huge crowds. They re-enact a supposed journey made by the gods to Gundicha Bari, two miles from Puri. Krishna rides a 14 m high chariot. Balarama, blue and Subhadra a smaller, 13 m high 'rath'. These raths are drawn by hundreds of people in a frenzy of devotion. Once started the relentless momentum is too great for the chariot to stop suddenly. It is commonly held that if one falls under the wheels of the rath of Jagannatha, moksha or salvation is instantaneous. The English term 'juggernaut' is an anglicised corruption of Jagannath, meaning a large object crushing those in its path (See Holy Places: Temples).

TEEJ

A festival for women in Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to herald the rains after the heat of May and June, in the month of Sravana (June-July). As the earth is newly greened, swings are suspended from trees and women play and sing in praise of Parvati, the Mother. This festival symbolises the departure of Parvati for her husband's home. Married daughters visit their parents during this period (See Religion: Hinduism).

KRISHNASHTAMI

Celebrated on the 8th day (Ashtami) of

Sravana, it marks the birth anniversary of Krishna, one of the most beloved gods in the Hindu pantheon. According to legend Vishnu took the form of Krishna to destroy his evil uncle, Kansa (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts – Dashavatara). Krishna devotees fast all day and eat only at midnight after the supposed hour of the divine birth.

RAKSHA BANDHAN

Celebrated in north India in the month of Bhadra, called Saluno in Haryana, to reinforce the bonds between brothers and sisters. The sister ties a rakhi (silk amulet) on her brother's wrist and prays for his prosperity and safety. The brother gives her a token gift that symbolizes his protective role. The festival derives its importance from the turbulent history of the north, where women were often the object of marauding invaders and therefore needed protection.

ONAM

Celebrated in Kerala in the month of Bhadra at the end of the southwest monsoons, it is a festival of spring and harvest which all communities and all religious groups join in. The Hindus believe that at this time of the year their ancient king, Mahabali (See Religion: Hinduism – Dashavatara – Vamana) visits his kingdom. To welcome him the streets are decorated with flowers and there is great feasting and merrymaking. The snake boat race is an annual event which takes place during Onam at Aranmula, Kottayam and Champakulam.

GANESHA CHATURTHI

Also called Vinayaka Chaturthi. The elephant-headed god, the remover of all obstacles (vighna) is always worshipped at the start of any auspicious event. It is said that even other gods offer prayers to Ganesha before venturing on a mission (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranic Gods). On Chaturthi in the month Bhadra, devotees, especially in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu worship clay images of the God. Modak, a special favourite of Ganesha (thus the name Modakapriya), a sweet of jaggery and coconut wrapped in rice flour and steamed, is made and distributed. Like Durga puja in Bengal where there is community worship of large images of the Goddess, in Maharashtra, images of Ganesha are installed at various centres and worshipped with great fervour for five, seven or eleven days and then taken in procession for an immersion in the sea.

VARALAKSHMI PUJA

Performed in honour of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity as the donor of boons (vara), special to married women. A local Andhra legend recalls how a poor woman was once visited by Lakshmi and having nothing else, offered her a nellikai (amla) fruit. Lakshmi blessed her with a shower of gold coins. On this day, a silver face of Lakshmi is tied to a coconut placed on a kalash (waterpot) and decorated with a silk skirt and flowers. Special prayers are recited. Since Lakshmi is said to have worshipped Shiva on this day (always a Friday in the second fortnight of August), Varalakshmi puja is a special event at Shiva temples like Thiruninrayur, Thiruvadi and Thiruvapur, all in Tamil Nadu.

NAVARATRI

Beginning with the new moon in the month of Ashwin, this is a composite festival celebrated all over India. During Durga puja as it is known in Bengal and Orissa, people worship nine aspects of goddess Durga on each one of the nine days. Durga has 1,008 names, each one representing a different form (See Religion: Hinduism – Shakti).

Navaratri is celebrated as a festival of nine auspicious nights in Gujarat where women and girls dressed in finery dance the Dandiya Ras and Raslila (See Performing Arts: Dance). In Tamil Nadu a special tiered platform is constructed in homes on which are placed icons, toys and other colourful objects. Friends and relatives are invited for the 'Bomma Kolu' as the arrangement is called. The women are given betel leaves (paan), kumkum, coconuts and sometimes little gifts, as auspicious offerings.

Southern India on the ninth day celebrates Saraswati puja. All objects of learning like books, stationery, musical instruments and so on are placed on a pedestal and worshipped. Next day coinciding with Dussehra is Vijaya Dashami, the books are taken out and read. This is also an auspicious day for Aksharabhyas—when children are initiated into learning (See Religion: Hinduism – Samskaras).

In northern India the tenth day after Navaratri is celebrated as Dussehra. This marks the culmination of a nine day enactment of Ramlila or the story of Rama (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana). Massive effigies of Ravana, his brother Kumbhakarna and son Meghanatha are erected, filled with fireworks and crackers and set off to great rejoicing, to mark the triumph of good over evil.



Durga Puja procession

VISHWAKARMA PUJA

In the month of Ashwin (Sept-Oct), when one's arms, tools and trade instruments are honoured—a student worships his books, a blacksmith his hammer, a clerk his pen and a soldier his gun.

KARWA CHAURTHA

Falls on the 4th day of Krishna Paksha (See Cosmos : Calendar) in Kartik. Women fast and pray all day long for the wellbeing of their husbands (See Karadayan Nombu). They break their fast only after sighting the moon in the evening.

DEEPAVALI

Or Diwali. Lit. 'rows of lamps'. The popular, festival of lights, celebrated throughout the country on Amavasya, the darkest night of the month at the end of Ashwin or beginning of Kartik (Oct/Nov). This composite festival runs for three days. The first night is

Chhoti Deepavali (little festival) on which five lamps are lit. The second day is the main festival, in honour of Lakshmi, goddess of fortune and beauty. In the south, an early morning bath (Ganga snanam) and the wearing of new clothes precedes puja (worship) and a festive lunch, followed by firecrackers and illuminations in the evening. The north follows a similar tradition but the evening and night are spent gambling, an echo of the ancient ritual of Dyuta Pratipada, in which people gambled on the morning of the first day of the bright fortnight of Kartik for good fortune.

The day after Diwali is celebrated as Dhanteras in the north, in honour of the divine physician Dhanwantari, perhaps as propitiation for good health in the coming winter and as thanksgiving for protection against the fevers and sickness of the monsoon gone by.

The south also celebrates Deepavali to mark the destruction of the demon Narakasura. Believed to be a tyrant from Pragyotishapura in Assam, he was slain by Krishna. The land was consequently lit up to celebrate his death. Many other provinces celebrate Deepavali to mark the homecoming of the epic hero Rama to Ayodhya, after 14 years exile and the defeat of Ravana (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana).

Diwali starts the New Year for Gujaratis and Marwaris. In Bengal, Kali puja is synonymous with Diwali.

‘Good over evil’ is thus the message of Deepavali, whatever the legend in vogue. As part of the preparations, houses and shops are cleaned and white-washed, junk is thrown away and lots of regional sweets, boxes of dried fruit and gifts of clothes and new utensils find their way to relatives, friends and business contacts. The firecrackers industry, centred in Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, comes into its own at this time, for fireworks are integral to Deepavali.

KARTIGAI

Either on the full moon following Diwali or a month and a half later Tamil Nadu and some of the other southern states celebrate Kartigai or the festival of lights. A number of diyas (earthen lamps) are lit and placed at the entrance to homes – as is done during Diwali in the rest of the country. In the south this festival has the same significance as Raksha Bandhan. The lamps are lit by sisters for the well being of their brothers.

MAKARA SANKRANTI

Makara Sankranti is the most important festival in Magha (See Cosmos: Calendar). The day prior to this is celebrated as Lohri, a harvest festival in north India. A bonfire is lit and into this is thrown harvest produce like sugarcane stalks, parched rice and sesame seeds. On Sankranti day, in northern India a khichri or mishmash of rice, lentils and vegetables is made and given in charity. In UP a big fair is held at the confluence at Triveni, Allahabad (See Holy Places). The fair is also called Magha mela. Ritual bathing takes place at Hardwar and Garhmukteshwar in UP and Patna in Bihar. Pongal Sankranti is celebrated mainly in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. This three day festival is observed on the 13th, 14th and 15th of January.

MATU PONGAL

Matu Pongal or Kanu Pongal is celebrated by sisters for the welfare of their brothers. This third day of Pongal is also the day

when the ‘mattu’ or cattle are worshipped.

TAI PUSAM

Tai Pusam is celebrated during the Tamilian month of Tai (Magha) and it commemorates the day Parvati gave a vel (spear) to her son Subramanya at the temple of Vaitheeshwara.

THYAGARAJA MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Thyagaraja Music Festival is held annually at Thiruvaiyaru to celebrate the birth anniversary of the great composer-saint Thyagaraja during January - February (See Performing Arts; Music; Sages and Saints).

DOL PURNIMA

Celebrated on the full moon of Phalgun by devotees of Krishna with devotional songs and processions. It is also the birth anniversary of the 16th century Vaishnava poet, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from Bengal (See Sages and Saints).

VASANT PANCHAMI

Vasant Panchami is a spring festival celebrated in honour of Saraswati, though other gods are also worshipped. The colour yellow is worn.

NARMADA MATA JAYANTI

Narmada Mata Jayanti celebrates the ‘birth’ of the holy Narmada river, two days after Vasant Panchami.

HOLI

Holi marks the end of the severe north Indian winter, in Phalgun. Two days of extraordinary license and uninhibited spraying of colour (gulal) on all and sundry, drinking bhang (an intoxicant) and singing and dancing to the beat of the dholak are the features of this festival, formerly a primitive fertility rite. On the first day, children receive special symbolic garlands of lotus seed and dried fruit. An evening bonfire is fed with wood and castaway things of the year gone by. The second day is for colour, bhang and song. Old foes are meant to be forgiven and friendly ties are renewed on Holi. The myth that fuels the bonfire tells of Holika, the demoness who was supposedly immune from the fire but burnt when she tried to destroy her nephew Prahlad, who was an ardent worshipper of Vishnu. But when his father, king Hiranyakashipu, tried to force Prahlad into worshipping him instead, Vishnu appeared in this fourth avatar, Narasimha, the man-lion and slew the demon king, who was otherwise invincible (See Religion: Hinduism – Vishnu).

SHIVARATRI

An austere festival on the 14th night of the new moon in the dark half of the month of

Phalgun (Feb-Mar). Prayer, fasting and penance for past sins, a nightlong vigil and ritual worship of the Shivalinga mark this festival, said to commemorate the night when Shiva first manifested himself as a towering linga with a flaming crown. Vishnu assumed a boar's body and burrowed deep into the netherworld and Brahma, in the form of a swan, flew higher and higher but neither could gauge the extent of the linga. Shiva decreed thereafter that he alone was the supreme creator, encompassing both Vishnu and Brahma and that he must be worshipped only in his phallic form. (See Religion: Hinduism – Shiva).

CHAITRA PURNIMA

Observed on the full moon of Chaitra in south India, it honours Chitrugupta, the scribe of Yama, god of death, who tallies people's good and bad deeds. His records decide an individual's reward or punishment after death. At the ancient temple of Chitrugupta in Kanchipuram near Madras, a bronze statue of the deity is taken out in procession on this day.

KARADAYAN NOMBU

On the first day of Chaitra women all over Tamil Nadu observe this solemn festival commemorating the legendary Savitri's triumph over Yama (god of death) and the retrieval of her husband from the dead (See Myths and Legends). Special adais (See Food: Cuisine – Bread and Batter) both sweet and salted are made, offered to god and eaten with a blob of home-made butter by all married women. Women also tie a symbolic yellow thread around their necks for the welfare of their husbands.

GANGAUR

Celebrated in Rajasthan in Chaitra (March-April), a month replete with festivals, Gangaaur honours Gauri (Parvati), the consort of Shiva, the eternal mother symbol of marital harmony. The myth relates that Parvati was the avatar of Vishnu's sister, Yogamaya, born to Mena and Parvat (lit. mountain, in this case the Himalayas). To win Shiva, who was deep in mourning and meditation after the death of his wife Sati, Parvati underwent severe penance and finally married him. She is also called Gauri, the golden one, hence Gangaaur. Rajasthan women fast, keep a night vigil and retell stories about Parvati. They dress in their best and walk in musical processions, holding clay images of Gauri on their heads, which are immersed in a river or pond. In Udaipur, a special feature of Gangaaur is a fair where young boys and girls are allowed to meet and choose their own wife or husband, without parental interference.

In drought-prone Jodhpur, Gangaur is also called Lotiya, after the lotas or waterpots which women carry, often for miles, to fetch water in. Tamil Nadu, the Chittirai festival at Madurai is a major processional event at the temple of Meenakshi (Parvati) and Sundareshwarar (Shiva) to commemorate their marriage (See Holy Places: Temples).

RAMANAVAMI

Falling on the ninth lunar day of the bright fortnight (Shukla Paksha) of Chaitra, it is celebrated as the birthday of Ramachandra (of the *Ramayana*) held to be the 6th incarnation of Vishnu. It is one of five Mahavratas (important fasts) observed since ancient times along with those observed for Janmashtami, Ganesha Chaturthi, Shivaratri and Durga Puja. Also known as Chota Navaratri in the north.

RASLILA

A mystic, circular dance, which re-enacts the dance of Krishna and the gopis. The dance symbolizes the universal manifestation of god (each gopi thought she was the favoured partner of Krishna and the message is, all human beings are equally beloved). This is danced five times a year, the most important festivals being Holi (Vasant Ras or spring dance) and Janmash-tami (Krishna's birthday). Legend traces the origin of Vasant Ras to Usha, an Asamese princess who went to Dwaraka in Gujarat where she married Aniruddha, Krishna's grandson. She taught the dance to the women of Saurashtra and it spread through northwest India. In Manipur, it is believed that Krishna revealed the dance to a refugee prince, Karta Maharaj, whose daughter was the first to dance Radha's role in a temple built by her father when he regained his kingdom.

HANUMAN JAYANTI

Celebrates the birth of Hanuman, a devotee of Rama and an important popular deity event today (See Religion: Hinduism—Epics—*Ramayana*). Both the *Ramayana* and *Hanuman Chalisa* (40 Hindi verses in his praise) are recited at this time. Many wayside shrines to Hanuman, the monkey god, dot the highways of India and curiously, long-distance drivers of all faiths, especially in the hills, pray to him for a safe journey, probably on account of his legendary strength and his heroic protector's role in the *Ramayana*. Tuesdays and Saturdays are fair days at major Hanuman temples in north India, attracting huge crowds of devotees. Many vehicles are adorned with calendar depictions of Hanuman worshipped with flowers and joss sticks.



Hanuman Jayanti revelry

JAINA

Jains have certain distinct religious festivals and like the Hindus, special vratas (fasts) and vows some of which are expiatory. They also join in the Hindu fairs and festivals of Holi, Makara Sankranti, Navaratri, Raksha-Bandhan, Pongal, Kartikai or Ugadi, adopting local customs and practices (See Philosophy; Religion: Jainism).

OLI

Celebrated twice a year in Chaitra (April) and in Ashwin (October), for nine days. During the tapa (penance), the Siddha-Chakra (yantra, mystical diagram) is worshipped daily. It represents the Pancha Parmeshthins (five great dignitaries) of the faith: the 24 Tirthankaras (liberated souls), the Acharyas (leaders of groups of monks), Upadhyays (teachers of sacred texts), Arhats and Siddhas (spiritual leaders).

The Shvetambara (whiteclad) school and the Digambara (sky-clad/naked) school attach other values too, to the Siddha-Chakra.

Oli involves a special fast according to prescribed rules (See Religion: Jainism)

PAJJUSHANA/PARJUSHANA

Lit. 'service'. This festival starts on the 13th day of the dark half of the month in Bhadr-pada (August/September) and ends after eight days according to the Shvetambara reckoning.

The Digambaras begin and end this festival called Parjushana (Sanskrit- Paryushana), or Dakshalakshana immediately after the end of the Shvetambara Pajjushana festival.

It is marked by prayers and alms giving.

JAANA PANCHAMI

Five days after Deepavali (Oct/Nov), marks the end of four months' compulsory stay at one place during the monsoon by Jain monks. It is an occasion for worship at temples, especially of scriptures in manuscript form.

PANCHAKALYANAKAS

Five auspicious events that mark the life of each Tirthankara. The three most popular Tirthankaras are Mahavira, Rishabhanatha and Parsvanatha. These events are:

- Chyavana/Garbhadhana—descent into mother's womb
 - Janma-kalyanaka—date of birth
 - Dishak—renunciation
 - Kevala-jnana—liberation from karma and ignorance
 - Nirvana—complete liberation or death
- Special prayers mark each occasion (See Philosophy).

JEWISH

PURIM

The festival of Lots (March/April), celebrates the providential deliverance of the Jews from massacre, in the 5th century BC in the Persian empire that stretched from Ethiopia to India. Esther, the Jewish wife of the Persian king saved her people, risking her life. The first recorded victory of the Jews over forces of anti-Semitism, it is marked by feasts, gifts and alms.

PESAH

Passover (April) commemorates the sparing of Jews by the angel of death before the exodus from Egypt, three thousand years ago. The Jews left Egypt in such a hurry that they had to eat unleavened bread on the way. In remembrance, a similar loaf (matzot) is eaten and during the eight days of this festival, any form of leaven is forbidden. It is preceded by vigorous spring-cleaning.

SHEBUOTH/SHAVOUT

Festival of weeks (May) a period of seven weeks of semi-mourning after Passover, also called Pentecost (50th Day). It is also associated with the defeat of the Jewish revolt against Rome in the 2nd century AD and the loss of many lives due to plague. Shavout is a summer harvest festival and commemorates Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

TISHA-BE-AV

'Fast of the 9th of Av' (August), a day of rigorous fasting and mourning for the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC and of the second temple on the same day in 70 AD. On this day the congregation sits on the floor and reads the Biblical *Book of Lamentations* – Prophet Jeremiah's eyewitness account of the doom of the first temple.

ROSH-HA-SHANA

New Year's Day (Sept/Oct), on the first day of the Jewish 7th month, Tishra, celebrated in memory of the agricultural life of Jewish ancestors, whose year began in the first month of autumn. Festive lights are lit at home and in the synagogue and special blessings are invoked, new clothes are worn, but it is a solemn day preceded by one month's fasting. It marks the start of the annual ten days of penitence.

SINHAT

Celebrated on the 9th day of the month of Sukkoth (Sept/Oct). On this day, the end of the Torah, (the last bit of the Deuteronomy, See Religion: Judaism) is read and is followed by a reading of the book of

Genesis. There is dancing and singing in the synagogue, with processionists holding aloft the Sepher Torah in seven circuits around the reading platform (Bima or Teba).

TABERNACLES OR SUKKOT

One of the harvest festivals (Sept/Oct). Immediately after Yom Kippur, Jews are enjoined to build booths of dry fronds, to remember the temporary dwellings used by the Israelis who wandered in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt. A happy festival, spent in praying and eating inside the booths.

YOM KIPPUR

Day of Atonement (Sept/Oct) on the 10th day of the month of Tishra, (10 days after Rosh-ha-shana), the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. After kindling the Yom Kippur lights the previous evening, the family, dressed in white, goes for a Kolnidree (all vows) service. A day ordained by the Torah for atonement of sins, it is marked by a strict fast from sunset to nightfall the next day.

HANUKKAH

Lit. Hebrew. 'dedication' Feast of the Dedication (December), commemorates the victory of Judas Maccabees over the Syrians. After this victory, the Jews were able to restore and rededicate in 164 BC the temple which had been vandalised by the enemies. An interesting story goes that the perpetual light was running out of oil but miraculously it lasted for eight days until fresh supplies arrived. To celebrate the miracle, Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days in mid-winter. A candle is lit on each of the eight days and on the eighth day all are lit on the traditional candlestick, the Menorah.

MUSLIM

ID-MILAD-UN-NABI

The Prophet's birthday, observed on the 12th day of the third month of the Muslim calendar (See Cosmos: Calendar). Congregations in remembrance of the Prophet are held in homes and public places, usually concluding with the distribution and sharing of sweets.

ID-UL-ADHA

The feast of the sacrifice; also called Baqr-Id or Id-e-Qurban or Id-uz-Zoha, on the 10th day of the 12th month, Hijri calendar. The feast commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac at god's command. Like Id-ul-Fitr, it is also a day for prayer and rejoicing. New clothes are worn and, after prayers, those who can afford it sacrifice animals in the name of god. The meat is divided equally among themselves, their friends and the poor. Such sacrificial killing is also permitted on the following two days.

ID-UL-FITR

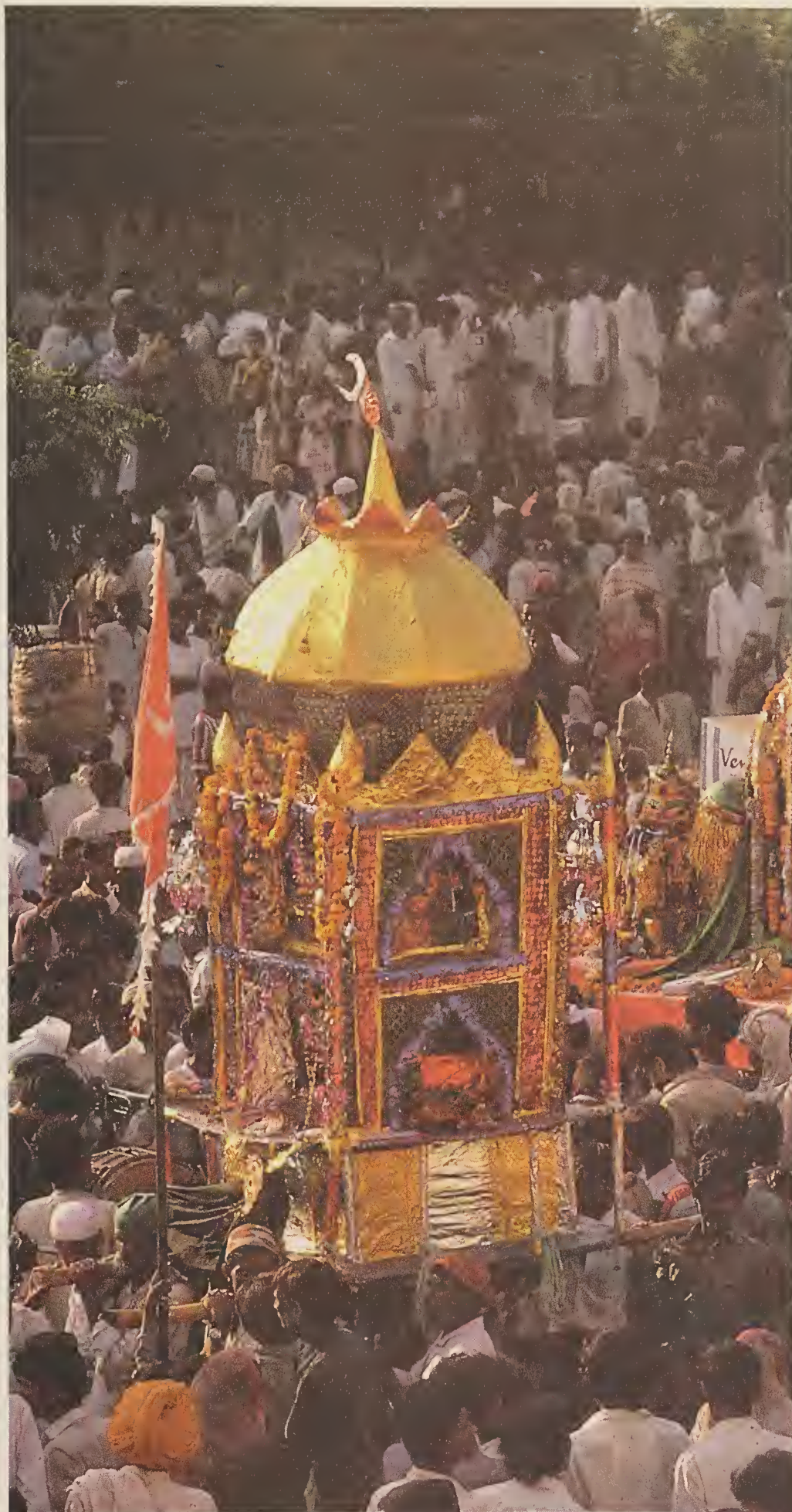
Feast of breaking the fast; on the 1st day of the 10th month of the Hijri calendar, following Ramadan, the month of fasting. 'Id' literally means rejoicing, hence no fasting is allowed on this day. Muslims wear new clothes, give away a fixed amount in charity, and pray in congregation, after which they visit friends and relatives. Sweet vermicelli (sewain) is traditionally served on Id-ul-Fitr (See Religion: Islam).

MUHARRAM

The first month of the Muslim calendar (also called Hijri), of which the first 10 days are spent mourning the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the prophet's grandson (10th day, Muharram, Hijri 61, 680 AD). During these days the events leading to the martyrdom (Sham-e-Ghariban) are recited in dramatised verses and Tazias (tableaus of the events and the martyr's tomb) are carried in procession. Muslims march in procession, beating their breasts and resorting to self-torture and flagellation.

SHAB-E-BARAT

The night of rejoicing/deliverance, observed on the eve of the 15th day, 8th month, Hijri calendar. On this night Muslims believe that god records in advance what will befall each of them in the coming year. Devout Muslims stay awake all night, praying, visiting the graves of relatives and fast the next day. Most, however, celebrate the night with fasting, exchanging sweets, especially halwa and lighting up their homes and mosques.



Tazias at Mubarram

PARSI

FIRE FESTIVAL/FESTIVAL OF FIRE

Jashan and worship of god and the divinity presiding over fire.

FRAVARDEGAN

A period of 10 days at the year end, set apart for ceremonies in honour of the Fravashis (guardian spirits) and the souls of each family's dead. The emblems of the Fravashis are flowers and water.

GAHAMBARS

Six seasonal festivals per year : mid-spring, mid-summer, harvest, mid-winter and end of winter. Gahambars are based on the seasonal divisions that existed in ancient Persia. Obviously they do not match the climatic cycle in India, but are observed anyway according to the ancient Parsi calendar. Thanksgiving and invocations mark these Jashans. Formerly, communal feasts followed the ceremonies.

JASHAN

Persian, generally term for 'festival' or solemn occasion of religious, seasonal and historical importance – but always with a religious flavour. Jashans are also observed when the day and the month of the Parsi calendar are of the same name – these are monthly Jashans, with a ceremony in honour of the presiding deity.

On festive occasions, thanksgiving prayers and invocations for god's blessings are made. On solemn occasions, besides prayers to divinities, the dead are remembered with suitable prayers.

In this faith, fire is worshipped as the "Son of Ahura Mazda", that is, the representative of god and is a must in Parsi ceremonies. The temple itself is called an 'Agiary' or 'Fire temple'. The offerings in a Jashan are representative of nature's bounty – water, milk, flowers, fruit and sometimes sweets made of wheat flour, milk, sugar and butter.

KHORDADSAL

Zoroaster's birthday, observed as a sacred day. Special prayers and discourses in honour of the Prophet are held.

NAOROZ

New Year's Day, celebrated as the main spring festival in ancient Persia. Its original seasonal importance has gradually declined in India and it is now mainly a day of religious duties and feasts.

ZAROTHOSHTNO DISO

The day of Zoroaster's passing away, observed with prayers and discourses.



Baisakhi celebration

SIKH

BAISAKHI

(April); the Indian New Year's day is not only the harvesting festival, but also recalls Guru Gobind Singh's founding of the Khalsa order (See Baisakhi).

GURU ARJAN'S MARTYRDOM

Commemorates in June, the martyrdom of the fifth guru, Arjan Dev, killed on the orders of Jehangir, the Mughal, who objected to his missionary work. Guru Arjan built the Golden Temple at Amritsar and compiled the Granth Sahib, the scripture of Sikh faith.

DIWALI

The Sikhs celebrate the festival (Oct/Nov) of lights as the day on which Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru, reached Amritsar on his release from captivity. A firework display at the Golden Temple in Amritsar marks the occasion (See Holy Places: Takhts).

GURU NANAK'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

One of the two principal Sikh festivals (Nov). On this day, religious assemblies are held and discourses delivered. The principal places of celebration are Nankana Sahib, Guru Nanak's birthplace, now in Pakistan, and Amritsar.

GURU TEG BAHADUR'S MARTYRDOM

Commemorates the martyrdom of the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (Nov/Dec), who was beheaded in 1675 by Aurangzeb, the Mughal, who wanted to suppress all religious activity by non-Muslims (See Religion: Sikhism).

SAHIBZADAS' MARTYRDOM

The observance of the martyrdom (Dec) of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh recalls how the Mughal subedar of Sirhind had these two children entombed alive. They were nine and seven years old. It was a reprisal for their father's fight against Mughal tyranny. This solemn occasion is commemorated near Sirhind in Punjab at a place called Fatehgarh Sahib.

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

This anniversary (Dec/Jan) shares equal importance with Nanak's birthday as a principal event in the Sikh calendar. Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the gurus and founded the Khalsa or the militant Sikh order (See Religion: Sikhism).

TRIBAL**CHUGALA**

A ceremony during the Wangala festival of the Garos of the north-east. Locally prepared rice beer is used for libation by the presiding priest and then the brew is sprinkled on all those present. Chu – beer; Gala – throwing.

PURA TOKA

The north-east Garo ceremony of marking the wooden posts of the house with a paste made of mashed rice. This marks the beginning of the harvest festival 'Wangala'. The women dancers dip their palms in the rice paste and press them on to the posts and the back of the village elders, leaving their palm print.

WANGALA

The harvest festival dance of the Garos. During the festival days, usually falling during October-November, rice from the newly harvested paddy is used to brew local beer. Yeast is added to ferment the beer. The dance starts with sprinkling of the beer sediment. Wan – yeast; Gala – throwing.

WEIKING

A Khasi (north-east) festival dance. This is a spring festival, held for three days in the month of April with dance and music.

TARNETAR FAIR

A bustling colourful fair held near Ahmedabad by the tribal communities of Gujarat every December - January. It is a time of festivity where goods are bought and sold with music, song and dance ending the day.



The colourful Tarnetar Fair



FOOD

Abara

The food of India, with its special techniques and its unparalleled range of spices is celebrated as much for its vast repertoire of splendid meat dishes as for its versatile vegetarian cuisine

A great many Indians are vegetarian, but for others, there is also a profusion of mutton (goat), chicken and fish dishes, and a variety of game like quail, partridge, and wild boar. Beef is taboo for Hindus and pork for Muslims, while at the other end of the scale, the strict vegetarianism of the Jains and Brahmins forbids even onion, garlic and certain tubers. The other great divide seems to be between rice and wheat eaters. Except for Kashmir, most of north India favours a staple diet of wheat. While central and west India indulge in both, the east and the south are essentially rice-eating. A complete Indian meal (thali) has a balance of flavours (a blend of salty, sweet, sour, sweet-sour, bitter and spicy). It will almost certainly include the following: rice, rotis (breads), dal (lentils), meat (if a non-vegetarian), spiced vegetables, dahi or curds (yoghurt, often spiced with diced or grated vegetables or fried lentil or with batter drops called boondi), pickles, papad (lentil wafers), a fresh salad and sweets.

CUISINE

Daily Fare

The hidden food of India is slowly emerging from private kitchens to public tables. The best known yet are Mughlai, south Indian and Goan cuisine. The Goans have excellent coastal specialities. The South has coconut-based gravies, plus a favoured seasoning of tamarind, curry leaves, mustard seeds, the resinous, fragrant gum called asafoetida (hing/perungayam) and peppercorns. Kashmiri cuisine is a category apart, heavily based on mutton (Rogan Josh or curried lamb is famous), rajma (red beans) and saffron-flavoured rice. Assorted meatballs in yoghurt sauces are also a Kashmiri speciality. The food of Bengal relies on mustard (as oil, seeds and seed-paste), poppy seeds, fish and rice for its special character, while Parsi (Zoroastrian) food has a unique sweetish taste from the plentiful use of dried fruit and nuts. Its best known dish is Dhansak (a rich gravy of lamb/chicken cooked with ground, spiced

lentil, served on rice). Gravy-less vegetables are called sabzi in the north, bhaji in the west, 'curry' in the south and tarkari or sabji in the east.

There is also a loyal following for Anglo-Indian dishes like rice and lentil khichdi (kedgerie), porridge, breaded 'cutlis' (cutlets), mulligatawny (lit. pepper water in Tamil) a hearty dish with rice and meat awash in spicy stock. And 'railway pudding' (caramel custard) that, along with jellies and fruit-custards, appears in remote railway stations and lonely rest houses.

The tribals have their own cuisine; for instance, every Khasi family of the north-east (See People : Tribes) makes tungrymbai, a special chutney of fermented soyabeans.

Restaurant – Mughlai

The prevailing cuisine of most north Indian and Indian restaurants abroad, Mughlai is a melange of the leftover Persian North-West Frontier cuisine of the old Mughal courts at Delhi and the hearty rustic fare of the Punjab. Emigres from Punjab monopolised public dining after Independence and set the trend. Marinated meat, fish and poultry or vegetables, all cooked in spiced onion-tomato gravies, tandoor (clay oven) breads and grilled/baked meats, thick dals (lentil soups), cottage cheese (paneer) cooked with peas/mushrooms/spinach are some of the best-known variations of 'restaurant-Mughlai.' So are pulaos (pilafs) – spiced rice mixed with dry vegetables/ curried meat/fruit, nuts and essence of rose, vetiver or saffron-milk. And kababs – meat in chunks (boti) or ground finely, shaped into either 'cigars' for skewering (seekh) or round, fat discs (shami).

Beer

CHUBOK

Rice beer. Common drink of the Garos (See People : Tribes) made of rice and fermented with locally prepared yeast. If consumed within a couple of days, it is not very intoxicating. It is muddy-white in colour and hence the name: Chu-liquor; bok-white.

KIAD

Rice beer, brewed locally by the Khasis (See People: Tribes).

Bread and Batter

Indian bread is usually unleavened. The commonest is the roti or chapati made of wheat flour or 'atta' and water, kneaded into dough, cooked on a hot griddle called

tawa. Also called phulka (puffed up) when blown up over direct heat. Layered and basted with butter or ghee, the roti transforms into a paratha, that can also be cooked stuffed, with cottage cheese/minced meat/potato/cauliflower/radish, or kneaded with tender green fenugreek/spinach before cooking.

Deep fried, basic dough fluffs up to become puris (loochees in the east). Stuffed, layered and fried in smaller rounds, it is called a kachori.

Baked in a tandoor (clay oven) with onion seeds it becomes naan. Flapped into large, fine discs on a convex 'Muslim tawa,' it becomes rumali (handkerchief) roti. When dough is fermented and baked, it becomes bakarkhani, a Kashmiri bread or when made of maize flour, it is 'makki ki roti,' eaten with creamed spinach and sarson ka saag or mustard leaves. Pancakes made of fermented rice-lentil batter or semolina (dosai) are popular breakfast and snack food. Originally south Indian, but now enormously popular almost everywhere in India, often stuffed with spiced potatoes. When steamed into dumplings, the dosa batter becomes idli, served with sambhar, the soupy dal of the south and coconut or onion chutney.

Rice-based batter is also made into apams in a wok, or into 'string hoppers' called idiappam (like vermicelli) or steamed in a tube, to emerge as Kerala's 'puttu.' A mixed, grainy batter of lentils is spiked with onion and green chillies and fried into stiff discs with a hole in the middle called vadai. Equal proportions of different lentils and rice soaked and ground to a rough paste, spread in a circle on a tawa is 'adai.' Most of these 'pancakes' are eaten with assorted chutneys, relishes and lentil-tamarind soups.

Western style bread is also popular in cities, towns, restaurants and trains. Called 'dubbalroti' (dough that has 'doubled' with yeast), it lends itself to a popular snack called 'pakora' where triangles of bread are batter dipped and fried. Small loaves, called 'pao' in the west, lightly fried in butter and served with a spicy mashed mixed vegetable makes the delicious 'pao bhaji.'

FLOUR

There are many kinds of flour used in Indian cooking. In preparing dishes, one kind of flour seldom replaces another.

ATTA

Whole wheat flour, commonly used in the north to make unleavened bread like chapati, puri, paratha. A versatile flour which is rolled, baked, roasted and fried, it lends it-

self to sweets like halwa, biscuits, chips and savoury snacks like 'papri' and 'gol gappa' popular in the north and east. Little lamps made of atta are used in ceremonies connected with festivals like Karwa Chauth in the north where the wife observes a day's fast for the well-being of her husband (See Festivals: Hindu).

BAJRE KA ATTA

Millet flour, known as the 'poor man's bread.' Coarser than maida (flour) or atta (wheat flour) but when made into chapatis and garnished with butter has a distinct nutty flavour.

BESAN

Gram flour, made from chickpeas (chana dal), used as a binding agent for koftas (meatballs or vegetable balls), in a batter for fritters and as the base for savoury snacks like dhokla (steamed dumplings), bonda (spiced potato curry balls dipped in a batter of besan and deep fried), or sev (fine, fried strands) or sweets like laddoos. Besan is also the prime ingredient in homemade face packs and is used as a face scrub and toner, mixed with malai (cream) and drops of rose water, or simply with water (See Adornment: Cosmetics).

COOKING STARCH/CORNFLOUR

Called nishasta, a fine starchy powder milled from maize and wheat used in a classic north Indian pudding, phirni, and in falooda, the fine vermicelli-like strands that go with Indian ice cream, kulfi.

MAIDA

Refined white flour, used as a thickener for gravies, mixed in batter or made into thin puris called 'loochois' in Bengal. European or left-over colonial dishes, especially those that call for white sauce are called 'anda-maida khana' (egg-flour-cuisine) by professional north Indian cooks.

RICE FLOUR

Chaval ka atta in Hindi or arisi mavu in Tamil. A pinch of it lends crispness to deep fried vegetables and thickens the more watery dishes of south Indian cuisine like kolambu, gotsu and rasa vangi that are mixed with plain rice. It is made into a thick batter along with urad dal for dosas and idlis (See Bread and Batter). In the north, it is used mainly in a pudding called phirni while across east, central and west India, it is the base of various pancakes, dumplings, fried snacks and sweets. Rice flour is also used in drawing 'kolam's' or alpanas, (mandalas) on the threshold of traditional homes (See Visual Arts: Design – Alpana, Kolam).

Ingredients

ALUM

Also called phitkiri, it is used in making candied white pumpkin (petha) and preserving green mangoes. A small lump of alum in water makes impurities settle at the bottom.

CHUNA

Ordinary slaked lime, (not the fruit) powdered and used in green mango preserve and in a popular post-prandial digestive, paan (See Nature: Herbs).

CITRIC ACID

'Nimbu ka sat,' used for curdling milk to make cheese (paneer) and as a souring agent in sherbets, jellies and sweet chutneys.

CUTTLEBONE

Called samundar jhag (sea foam), it is used in making a typical spongy Bengali sweet, rasogulla; now largely replaced by commercial baking powder.

DATES, DRIED

Used in fruit chutneys. When soaked in water, believed to be 'strengthening' for convalescents and pregnant women.

ESSENCE

Rose essence or gulab ruh, used in flavouring gulab jamun (a Bengali sweet) and rose sherbet. A mild, delicate fragrance of desi (Indian) roses. Also sprinkled on guests from silver 'rose-water sprayers' at weddings.

Kewra essence, made from kewra flowers, is used for flavouring sweets in sugar syrup, like petha (candied white pumpkin), ras malai (cream cheese cooked in double cream). Itr kewra, a stronger concentrate than ruh kewra, is used in dry sweets like burfi (milk toffee) and gajar halwa (grated carrot pudding). Kewra is also used to perfume meat pulao (See Nature: Trees/Plants).

FENUGREEK LEAVES

Called methi or vendiyam, a herb with small, aromatic green leaves, also sold dried (kasoori methi). Used to flavour chicken and fish and cooked as a classic vegetable dish (subzi) with potatoes (aluminum). Slightly bitter in taste, it is a popular winter green.

GHEE

Clarified butter made by boiling pure, white butter until the clear fat separates. Normally, the fat solidifies into granules, called 'danedar' (seeded) ghee in the north. If stirred continuously while boiling, the ghee becomes a smoother solid, which is

considered less flavourful than danedar ghee. It is called 'neyi' in the south, 'thoop' in the west. A dollop of pure ghee (from butter) is usually added to parathas, khichdi (a rice and lentil dish), rice and upma (a porridge made from cream of wheat) or halwa. In the Punjab, growing children, pregnant women and new mothers are almost medicinally dosed with ghee for building strength.

GUR

Gur (vellam in the south) or molasses or jaggery comes from two sources – sugarcane and date palm, which is more favoured in eastern India (Bengal and Orissa). Both can be had in liquid and solid form. Unrefined cane sugar is used in chutneys, in sweetened dals and subzis of the west and eaten with pure ghee and rotis or stuffed, mixed with coconut, into dumplings called 'modak,' specially made on Ganesha Chaturthi because of the elephant-headed God's alleged fondness for this sweet. Jaggery is also crushed and mixed with dried ginger powder (sonth) and ghee and rolled into pills as a post-natal pick-me-up for new mothers. It is said to warm the blood and is used to bind special winter sweets like gajak and revdi made of gingili and jaggery (See Festivals: Hindu).

MAGAZ'CHAR

Four types of kernels, of cucumber, pumpkin, water-melon and sweet-melon used in sweets like barfi and in thandai, a cooling summer drink made with ground almonds and rose petals.

MALAI/CREAM

The cream that is formed when milk is boiled and cooled. It is used in sweets and Mughlai gravies. Malai, milk and butter have legendary importance in Indian tradition devolving from the pastoral Aryans who measured their wealth in cows. Krishna, the most beloved avatar in the Hindu pantheon, was a celebrated 'butter thief' as a child (Navaneeta chora). A major event in Hindu myth is the churning of the ocean of milk (Kshirasagara Manthana), which yielded amrita, the nectar of immortality. Folk proverbs abound, using metaphors and similes of milk, cream and butter (See Religion: Hinduism).

NUTS

Nuts are used as garnish for sweets and pulao (tahiris), ground into thickeners for gravies and fried in oil or ghee to flavour porridges and sweets. High protein peanuts are popular in the west, in curries and vegetables or in dry chutney powders. Ground almonds are used frequently as

gravy thickeners while pistachios figure in puddings like phirni and in burfis. Walnuts are used in chutneys in Kashmir, where they are commonly grown, while the ubiquitous cashewnut from Kerala is made into a popular burfi and is also a favoured garnish for pulaos and spicy rice dishes like *bisi bela huli anna* (lit. hot lentil tamarind rice) from Karnataka. Almonds are specially sought after as 'brain food,' from a belief in their stimulative power. The best are 'gut-bandhi badam' with more oil (*rogni*) in them. In many homes, almonds are soaked overnight and fed to growing children in the morning as a tonic. Also popular during Diwali are the slender nuts of the chilgoza pine.

POMEGRANATE SEEDS

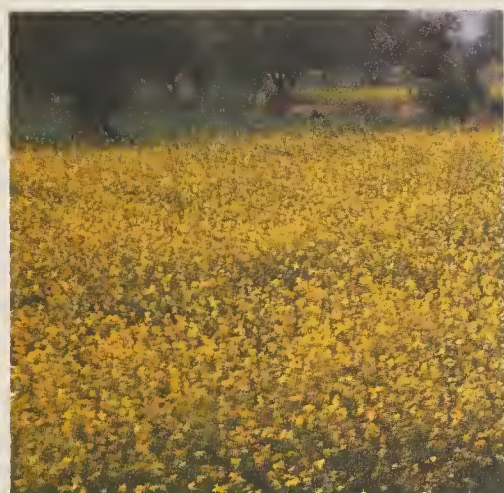
Anardana, often used to flavour classic north Indian dishes like *kabuli chana* (chick peas) and *pakor*s (fritters).

POPPY SEEDS

Called *khuskhus*, from a variety of poppy that does not yield opium. Small white seeds ground into paste; used as a thickener for some chutneys and gravies. It is used in certain special dishes in Bengal and Orissa. A favourite is 'postor bada' made only of *khuskhus* seeds (See Nature: Herbs).

PULSES

Called *dal* or *paruppu*, *pappu*, *varan*, the edible seeds of leguminous plants rich in protein are a staple Indian food. Livelihood is referred to as 'dal-roti.' *Dal* can be powdered and made into batters to form pancakes or fritters, cooked into *puris* and seasoned with spices, boiled along with vegetables and tamarind water into the fragrant stews of the south or pressure-cooked with rice into nourishing *khichdis* and *pongals*, eaten by invalids and infants. *Dal* and rice is one of the most enduring dishes in India.



A mustard field

Varieties of lentils

Red lentils, 'masur ki dal' – salmon pink and flat, eaten in north and central India.

Split green beans (*moong ki dal*, *pasi paruppu*, *payar*), used in *khichdi*, pureed or ground into 'bath powders' mixed with sandalwood powder and used instead of soap in south India.

Split black beans (*urad ki dal*, *ulundu*) cooked in purees, ground into batter for *dosas* or used to stuff *kachoris* (savory fried *puris*).

Bengal gram (*chane ki dal*) made into a spicy lentil dish, ground to a powder to make *besan* (See Flour), extensively used for batters (See Bread and Batter) and cosmetics (See Adornment: Cosmetics).

RAISINS

Dried grapes, *munna*ca, *kishmish* or *draksha*, used to speckle sweets and pulaos, in chutneys and preserves. Soaked, given to infants as a tonic.

SANDALWOOD POWDER

Sandal ka burada, *chandana podi*, used in making sandal sherbet (See Adornment: Cosmetics – Chandan).

SULTANAS

Kishmish, seedless raisins especially popular with children and as a garnish for *halwa*. Walnuts must be eaten only with raisins, to guard against sore throats.

TAMARIND

Imli, *puli*, the brown pulpy pod of the tropical tamarind tree. An extract of tamarind is widely used in south Indian cooking and it is the base for various chutneys, pickles and summer drinks across India. Tamarind is also used to polish brass, silver and copper, to shine pressure cookers and pots and pans (See Nature: Trees/Plants).

VARK

Edible silver leaf, made by beating pure silver into superfine, papery sheets, used to decorate sweets like *burfis*, *halwas* and special pulaos (a rice dish). It is also dabbed on *paan* (betel leaf).

YOGHURT

Curds. Various called *dahi*, *thayir*, *doi*, *masuru*, a staple in Indian diet; milk 'set' by an addition of *lactobacilli* from old yoghurt. Eaten plain or as *raitas* (See Cummin) or *pachadis* or hot chutneys with vegetables and fruit added to it; beaten thin with water and seasoned as a summer drink; added by the spoonful and browned in gravies; steamed with sugar and garnished with *sultanas* and nuts as a pudding; eaten with rice and *rotis* (See Bread). *Dahi* is virtually a concept in the Indian scheme of things,

with ancient mytho-religious resonance deriving from the Krishna cult and early Aryanism; yoghurt was an important milk product for pastoral people and was given religious sanctity as Krishna's favourite food along with milk and butter (See Religion: Hinduism).

Oils

GROUNDNUT OIL

Called *munghphali ka tel* or *kadale yennai* (south), it is used in cooking vegetables and frying *papads* (lentil wafers), especially in the west and in parts of central and north India. It does not solidify in the cold and, if it is refined, does not impart any flavour of its own.

MUSTARD OIL

Called *sarson ka tel*, *karwa tel* (bitter oil) or *kadugu yennai*, it is widely used in north and east India, particularly Bengal and Orissa where almost all cooking is done with mustard oil. When heated to smoking point, it loses some of its bitter pungency. Used as a preservative in pickles, for frying fritters and fish or currying vegetables. Like sesame (*til*) oil in the south, mustard oil is used for rub-downs and massages in the north. Despite its unpleasant raw smell, it is popular and is said to help improve circulation in winter (See Nature: Trees/Plants).

OLIVE OIL

Zetoon ka tel, extracted from ripe olives, commonly grown in Assam. Not used for regular cooking in India except for *Karachi halwa* (a rich cornflour based sweet of north India), since it does not solidify in winter.

SESAME OIL

Also called *gingili oil*, *nalla yennai* or *til ka tel*, it is used in south Indian cooking for flavouring some vegetable stews or pouring over a spice mixture (*molagai podi*) eaten with *idlis* (steamed rice cakes). Also used in 'avakkai,' the pungent mango pickle of Andhra Pradesh. The Goans use it in *pork vindaloo*. This oil remains clear in the cold and in the south, is a favoured hair and bath oil, especially for massaging newborns. It has a distinct nutty flavour. Lamps are lit with *til* oil to mitigate the malefic influence of the planet Saturn or *Shani* (See Cosmos: Astrology).

VEGETABLE OIL

Called *vanaspati*, it is made from a mixture of oil-based ingredients and solidifies in the cold like coconut oil. Universally used in cooking.

Spices

AMCHHOOR

Lit. mango powder made of sour, dried, raw mangoes, used to flavour gravies and vegetables.

ANISEED/FENNEL

Called sonf or sombu, the seed of the anise plant is used as a flavouring when spluttered in hot oil, added raw to pickles, or powdered and added to curries, used whole in a five spice mixture (panchphoran) unique to Bengal and powdered in Kashmiri cuisine.

Sonf is chewed as a digestive after meals and served, mixed with rock sugar (mishri) as a matter of course in north Indian restaurants and homes to cleanse the palate and freshen the mouth after a meal. A cupful of water in which a teaspoon of sonf has been boiled is a home remedy for digestive complaints in infants.

ASAFOETIDA

A strongly flavoured brown resin from Persia, also called heeng or perungayam. Available both in lumps and granules, it is widely used across India. A common rule of Indian cookery is, if heeng is used in a dish, garlic is not, as both have strong flavours. Heeng is also believed to cure flatulence, particularly in infants, and is credited with beneficial digestive properties (See Nature: Herbs).

BAYLEAF

Also called tej patta or pattayelai, an aromatic leaf, dried and browned in hot oil to flavour curries and pulaos (spiced fried rice). Used mainly with garam masala, cloves, cardamom and cinnamon.

BLACK PEPPER

Kali mirch, karu molagu, grown mostly in Kerala has been exported for centuries and was one of the major attractions for traders-turned-colonists. Peppercorns are the dried berries of the pepper plant, whose heat and pungency make it a popular ingredient in curries, raitas, pachadies and salads. Peppercorns are boiled in milk with a pinch of turmeric powder as a remedy for colds and sore throats.

CARDAMOM

Elaichi, yalakkai, aromatic fruit of a seed-like plant found in India, Sri Lanka, Jamaica and Zanzibar. The pods of the 'large' variety have brown skins and the 'small' variety has green skins. Brown cardamoms are 'hot' and used in flavouring curries, vegetables, dals and pulaos. The delicate green variety is used only in sweets and in some curries. It is also chewed raw as a breath freshener.



Garam masala, the hot spices

CAYENNE PEPPER

The closest term is 'degi' mirch. Of Kashmiri origin, the seeds are discarded. The pods are dried and sieved to make a rich colouring and flavouring for gravies.

CHILLI, GREEN

Hari mirch, a versatile, common flavouring, eaten raw, pickled, spluttered in oil, fried in batter (pakora), used as a garnish, cooked with vegetables, dals and khichdis.

CHILLI, RED

Lal mirch, grown widely in Gujarat and now a common Indian flavouring, said to be introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century, from the Americas. Earlier, black pepper, grown mainly in Kerala, was the major fiery flavour.

CINNAMON

Darchini (Chinese wood). Aromatic sticks of the inner bark of a tree grown in Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. Used in curries and pulaos. A garam masala (compound spice mixture) ingredient.

CLOVES

Lavang, the dried stamen of the flower of a tree that grows in Indonesia, Madagascar and Zanzibar. Used in garam masala and in pulaos and as garnishing for certain dishes. Also used to pin the folded pastry cover of a stuffed sweet called Lavanga Latika. Clove oil soothes tooth aches and often a quick home remedy for relieving toothache is to tuck a clove into the affected corner of the mouth and carefully keep it there for some time to release the oil.

CORIANDER

Dhania, kosmalli, kothmir, an aromatic herb, commonly used in three forms: whole seeds, powdered seeds and fresh leaves. Whole seeds are roasted and used in a variety of chutney powders and spice mixtures, especially in sambhar, garam masala and panchphoran. Powdered dhania is a common spice for dals

and vegetables and the leaves are ground into chutneys or used as garnish (See Nature: Herbs).

CUMMIN, BLACK

Kala zeera, siyah zeera, grown in Europe, Mexico and Kashmir. Used whole to flavour curries and pulaos and in garam masala (compound spice mixture).

CUMMIN, WHITE

Sufaid zeera, jeeragam, this variety is commonly used in flavouring curries, dals, vegetables. It is roasted and powdered to flavour raita, a preparation with yoghurt to which fresh, diced vegetables like tomatoes, cucumber have been added; and as the base for a chutney powder. In summer, a popular cooling drink jaljeera (jeera water) is traditionally served in small terracotta cups (mutkainas) with a cube of ice and a mint leaf (See Nature: Herbs).

CURRY LEAVES

Kari patta, karuveppilai, meetha neem; a common flavouring for vegetables, curries, sambhar (a lentil dish), porridge, and rice in south and west India. Most Indian homes have a pot or tree and use freshly plucked leaves. Also made into wet and dry chutneys.

FENUGREEK SEEDS

Methi seeds, whole, fried or roasted and powdered, are used as 'tarka' or garnishing. Used commonly in pickles across India and part of a five spice or 'panchphoran' mixture in Bengal. Though bitter, the way it is cooked in UP and Rajasthan – particularly the 'bedwi' that is an accompaniment to deep-fried crisp puris – turns it into a great delicacy.

GARAM MASALA

Lit. hot spices. A mixture of spices like cloves, cardamom (large and small) and cinnamon sticks and bayleaf. Garam masala is used whole or ground into powder or paste to lend that tangy, spicy flavour to food.

KOKUM

The sour rind of a fruit, *garcinia indica*, sliced and soaked in water for its extract, which flavours dals and curries in the south and west. It is also used in a digestive drink. A smoked version (dried over wood smoke) is used in cooking fish in Kerala, where it is called kodampoli.

OREGANO

Ajwain, homam; used in lemon pickles, batters for fried fish, puris and pakoras. For upset stomachs, a popular home remedy is to lightly pound half a teaspoon of ajwain with some rock salt (kala namak) and swallow the mixture in one gulp, followed by a few quick sips of warm water. This is a cure-all for flatulence, dyspepsia and acidity (See Nature: Herbs).

MACE

Javitri; the hard shell or 'skin' of the nutmeg seed (jaiphal). This streaky red skin is more 'fiery' than the gentle taste of nutmeg. It is used in pulaos and meat curries and in garam masala (See Nature: Herbs).

MUSTARD

Rai, sarson. Rai is the finer and 'sarson' the larger variety of mustard seeds. Commonly used in pickles and curries and a popular spice in the east, south and west. The crushed yellow seeds are used in a simple pickle with green chillies, salt, turmeric and oil (See Nature: Trees/Plants).

NIGELLA

Kalonji, the black teardrop-shaped seeds often called 'onion seeds.' Used in pickles, in panchphoran and scattered over tandoori breads like 'naan.' (See Panchphoran, Bread and Batter).

NUTMEG

Jaiphal; kernel of the fruit of the myristic tree. Finely powdered on special nutmeg graters, it is used as a flavouring for sweets. Jaiphal powder, mixed in a few drops of water, is given to colicky infants and as a 'blood warmer' in winter (See Nature: Herbs).

PANCHPHORAN

Bengali five-spice mixture of rai, methi, jeera, kalonji and sonf (mustard, fenugreek seed, cummin, nigella and anise).

SAFFRON

Kesar, the stigma of the crocus plant that grows in Kashmir (and Spain). Its delicious aroma and rich yellow colour make it an expensive flavouring, used in kheer (sweetened milk), in curries and pulaos (See Nature: Trees/Plants).



Jalebis, sweet sizzlers

SONTH

Dried ginger and its powder, used in Kashmiri food and in a popular sweet-sour tamarind based chutney named sonth. It is also used in soothing teas for cold, fever, congestion of the chest and sore throat (See Nature: Herbs).

TURMERIC

Haldi, manjal; the aromatic yellow powdered root of a plant grown in India and the West Indies, used as a colouring agent in cooking. Used regularly it is a depilatory cosmetic, an antiseptic and a coagulant for wounds. One of its little-known emergency uses is to temporarily plug a leaky radiator in a vehicle. A fistful of haldi floats down to the hole (if small) and congeals into an effective block until proper mechanical help can be found (See Adornment: Cosmetics; Nature: Herbs).

Snacks

A whole genre across the Indian board, for eating between meals, while waiting for trains and buses or just munching in the mid-morning tiffin and afternoon tea. The north specialises in potato-stuffed, fried pastry triangles (samosas) and the south in fried lentil doughnuts (vadas). Chaat and namkeen are general terms for a range of spiced nibbles in the north.

Sweets

Indian sweets are generally based on thickened milk (khoya) and rice or chickpea flour. Cardamom, nutmeg, pistachio, cashew, almond, raisin, saffron, jaggery, rose-water and a hint of camphor are some of the commonly used garnishings. Bengali confections are particularly favoured across the land, especially sweets which use cottage cheese (paneer) or khoya as a

base. Popular sweets are rasogullas and gulab jamuns, cottage cheese and khoya balls soaked in scented sugar syrup. Favourite Indian delicacies include jalebi (feather light, deep fried flour 'curlicues' soaked in syrup), halwa (semolina pudding), sohan halwa, and rich, chewy, nut-embedded sweets.

Techniques**BAGHAAR**

Garnishing with oil, variously called tadka, chhonk, phodni, taalichhal. Cookbooks agree that this everyday Indian technique is not used anywhere else in the world. Oil or ghee (See Ghee) is heated until it is short of smoking hot. Whole spices or chopped ginger/garlic are dropped in, which promptly swell, pop or darken, releasing their 'browned' taste into the oil. This seasoned oil, with all its spices, is poured over cooked vegetables, pulses, salads or curds or else cooked with raw food. Common seasonings: curry leaves, cummin seeds, black mustard seeds, fennel seeds, whole dried red chillies, whole cloves, cardamom pods, cinnamon sticks, bayleaves, black peppercorns, fenugreek seeds, coriander seeds, onion seeds.

BROWNING

The proper browning of gravy sauces known as 'bhunoing.' This is the immediately perceivable difference between the regional foods of north and south India: the north is noted for its splendid, heavy browned gravies; the south, west and east eat lighter dishes.

REGIONAL CUISINE

Each region in India rejoices in characteristic dishes that reflect local history, climate and natural bounty.

NORTH

Alu-Methi

Diced potatoes (alu) cooked with tender, slightly bitter fenugreek greens (methi). Carrots sometimes replace potatoes.

Amritsari Machhi

Fried fish marinated with ajwain (oregano or ptychotis seed).

Bhare Karele

Bittergourd (karela), a vegetable stuffed with spice paste and shallow fried.

Bharta

Smoked egg plant (baingan), skinned and mashed, cooked with onions, tomatoes, garlic and coriander. Eaten with rotis or parathas.

Chhole-Bhature

Chickpeas (chhole) spiced with crushed pomegranate seed, eaten with fried, fermented bread (bhature).

Karhi

Yoghurt soup thickened with gram flour dumplings, seasoned with curry leaves.

Mah ki dal

Black lentil soup, thickly pureed with fresh cream.

Palak Paneer

Curried spinach (palak) cooked with cube of cottage cheese (paneer), eaten with rotis. Also made with peas (matar) instead of spinach.

Rajma-Chaaval

Red kidney beans (rajma) eaten with plain rice.

Yakhni

Kashmini meatballs in yoghurt sauce.

SOUTH

Avial

Mixed vegetables stewed with coconut, eaten with rice.

Chitranna

Boiled rice mixed with lemon juice, fried lentils, green chillies, finely cut ginger, curry leaves and cashew nuts.

Erissari

Kerala curried lentil often made with sweet pumpkin and fried coconut.

Konju Pulao

A dish of the Moplahs (Kerala Muslims), in which fried prawns (konju), coconut and cashew nuts are baked with rice.

Kootu

A stew of vegetables and lentils, lightly spiced with mustard seeds and curry leaves.



Fare from the south

Pachadi

Salads of cucumber, tomato or pumpkin in a thick yoghurt dressing, spiced with mustard spluttered in oil.

Olan

Poached ash gourd with black-eyed beans.

Puliyodarai

Boiled rice spiced with tamarind sauce and peanuts.

Thayirsaadam

Boiled rice with yoghurt, green chillies, curry leaves, grated green mango.

Vankaya pulusu

Lentil and tamarind soup of Andhra Pradesh with small brinjals and 'pearl' onions. Also called sambhar.

EAST

Alu Posto

Potatoes simmered in poppy seed paste (khushkus).

Chechki

Mixed vegetables, chopped fine and lightly cooked.

Cholar Dal

Stewed lentils and coconut.

Charchari

Vegetables with a five spice mixture (panchphoran) and mustard.

Chingri Macher Malai Kari

Prawns cooked in coconut milk.

Kheer Kamala

A fragrant sweet dish of milk cooked and flavoured with orange juice and peeled orange segments.

Malpua

Fried rounds of dough, soaked in sugar syrup.

Mishti Doi

Yoghurt sweetened with date palm jaggery.

Sorshe Mach

Fish cooked with pungent mustard sauce.

Suktoni

Mixed vegetables (carrots, pumpkin, peas and beans) with a few essential bits of karela or bittergourd.

WEST

Amti

Maharashtrian dal (lentils pureed with tamarind sauce and 'black' spice mixture).

Bibinka

Goan layered pancake of coconut, and molasses.

Dal-Bati-Churma

A Rajasthani delicacy, dal (lentil sauce), bati (hard rolls, stuffed with nuts) and churma, powdered jaggery.

Dhokla

Steamed squares of yoghurt and chickpea flour, spiced with coriander and chillis. A Gujarati dish.

Ker-Sangri

Available only in Rajasthan, the berries and pods of local khejri trees cooked as a dry vegetable dish.

Khandvi

Steamed chickpea flour rolls, garnished with coconut.

Patrel

Colocasia leaves, specially stuffed, sliced and fried.

Poha

Beaten rice flakes cooked into a dry, fluffy porridge, spiced with turmeric, mustard seeds, chilly, curry leaves, and peanuts.

Undhiyan

Vegetables cooked underground in a clay pot, a Gujarati speciality.

Xacuti

Goan chicken curry (pronounced Shakoothi).

THE HOME

Common terms from all over India for everyday things and places around the house.

AAINA, KANNADI
Mirror.

AANGAN
Court yard

ALAMARI/ALMIRAH
Cupboard (from Portuguese *almario*).

ARAM KURSI
'Easy chair,' lounging chair.

ATTARDAAN/PANEERVEESI
Rosewater sprinkler.

BADNA
Brass spouted pot from Bengal, used for pouring water to wash hands.

BALTI
Bucket.

BANTO/BHANTO
A copper container from Saurashtra. Circular, with a dome-shaped lid, embellished with geometric patterns made from pieces of copper-sheets hammered to the required shape.

This multi-purpose box is used as a jewellery box in some parts where it is locked and kept inside the pataro (large wooden chest) and as a container for sweets in other regions.

BHATURO
A brass tumbler from Saurashtra. This object of sheet-brass is placed upside down on a water pot hung under a bullock-cart in such a way that the cylindrical portion gets inserted inside the mouth of the pot and the base of it becomes a tight lid. As the cart moves, the water splashes against the 'lid' but does not fall out. While drinking water, the 'lid' is used as tumbler.

In the tribal areas of Dahod, the same object is made of clay.

BOGHENU
A milking pot from Gujarat made of brass. This broad-based pot's width is usually more than its height. This provides it with great gravity, essential for a milking pot which is kept tilted on the knees or the ground while milking. In Saurashtra, the same pot is carried by mendicants who beg food, especially flour, from house to house.

BISTAR/KATTIL
Bed.

CHADAR
Sheet

CHAKLA-BELAN
Board, rolling pin.

CHAMUCH
Spoon.

CHARPOY
String cot.

CHARU
A picturesque copper vessel used for storage in western India. It has a bowl-shaped base, a steep, tapering shoulder, a double-rimmed narrow neck and an inverted bell-shaped handsome collar with a pair of solid copper rings attached as handles. This multi-purpose pot was used for storing grain or water. It is also likely that the pot was used as a repository for hidden treasure.

CHATTAI/PAI/MADUR
Woven cane/ reed grass mat.

CHIK
Reed screen.

CHIMTA/SANDSI/IDUKI
Tongs.

CHULHA (ADUPPU)
Stove.

CHUNALI
A container for slaked lime or chuna which is an essential ingredient of paan (See Nature: Herbs). Since the box was to be carried always in hand, it was shaped to fit snugly in the hand.

DASTARKHAN
Tablecloth.

DABARA
A round rimmed vessel for cooling coffee, given with the 'tumbler' or glass, usually of steel, in the south.

DABBA
A box or container of copper. Its latch and handle are made by hammering and not casting as is usually the case.

Used mainly for keeping supari (areca nut) in Saurashtra.

DABLO
A brass-sheet container also from Saurashtra, rests on three hollow legs and has a dome-shaped lid usually adorned with embossed geometric patterns. It is an important part of the dowry given to a Kutchi bride. As such, it was used for storing ornaments and precious clothes. It is said that during a raid, these containers, filled with precious things were locked and lowered

in a water-well and lifted up again after the danger had passed.

DEG/DEGCHI
Constructed from pieces of copper-sheet; this traditional vessel has a broad base for catching maximum heat from the open fire. From the rim of the shoulders it narrows steeply towards its mouth to which a thick copper-collar with two solid copper-rings (handles) is affixed. The water that gets heated at the bottom rises upwards and gets pushed downwards again by the tapering wall thus creating a regular rotation of its contents.

DEGDO AND BHAPKO
Both these pots from the Ahmedabad regions of Gujarat are constructed by hammering copper-sheets and are used for distilling perfume or rose-water. Degdo is used as a receptacle in which the natural source material of perfume (like flowers) is kept mixed with water. A pipe rising from the mouth of this pot goes into the second pot called bhapko which is the receiver. As fire is lit below the degdo, the vapours from the mixture are transferred to the cool receiver.

DHANKU
A copper serving bowl customarily used by the Islamic pastoral communities of the Banni region (See People: Tribes) of Kutch. Each house has several such utensils placed in front of the guest during a meal. After serving a course, the rest of the food is kept in these covered bowls for subsequent helpings.

DIVAN
Low bed/settee.

DOGHLI
A cooking pot with a shallow bowl and a concave high shoulder-wall narrowing upwards with lobe-shaped copper handles. The shape of the pot is designed for cooking rice, pulses and other 'soft' cooked things.

DOYO
A highly-ornamented brass ladle from Gujarat.

GADDA/MEDDAI
Mattress.

GAGAR
The word 'gagar' comes from the Sanskrit gargara meaning a pot. This copper water pot, of austere beauty, from UP is used for fetching water; it has a comparatively narrow neck to prevent spilling; it can be easily lifted when filled, by grasping the rim and it is convenient enough for carrying

on the head, the hip as well as on the kavadi (the balance-shaped bamboo-carrier conventionally carried on the shoulder by professional watersuppliers).

GALICHA/KALEEN
Carpet.

GANGALAM
Large water container with handles.

GAUTAKIA/LODH/KOLBALISH
Bolster.

GOLI
A must in every rural household, the brass goli (or its equivalent in other parts of the country) from western India is used to churn butter from dahi or yoghurt. (Goli also means round, pill or bullet).

The pot constructed from hammered sheets of brass has more breadth than height. The churning is done by a wooden churning-rod, which separates butter from buttermilk. In certain regions, the same pot is used for gathering milk, heating it up, making it into yoghurt and churning it for butter.

The goli, along with dablo, and kato-dan, karandio formed the four main vessels given as dowry to the Kutchi bride by her parents.

GOLI BHADARVO
The goli bhadarvo, mainly popular in Saurashtra, is also the name of the 11th Hindu month Bhadra. The rainwater collected during the month of Bhadarvo was treasured for the conventional cleaning of utensils before the festival of Diwali in the 12th month (the Gujaratis observe the day after Diwali as New Year Day. See Cosmos: Calendar). It is believed that the utensils cleaned in this water remained bright, shining and 'stainless' for a longer time. The pot was used for water and is therefore also known as bhadarvo.

GULABDAN/PHOOLDAN/POOKOODAI
Flower basket, from which small lengths of flowers strung together are offered.

GUSALKHANA
Bath room.

HAMAL DASTA
Small mortar-pestle.

HASUA/ARUWA MANAI
Vegetable cutter on a wooden board.

HINDOL/OONJAL/JHOOLA
Swing.

HOOKAH
Hubble bubble, water pipe.

IDLI/DOSA KALLU
Grinding stone for idlis and dosas.

JAMAKAALAM/DHURRY
Cotton/woollen floor spread.

JHAAWA
Terracotta foot scrubber.

JHARO/CHHABDI
A giant sieve for rice, made of copper with holes in concentric circles on its lower half. To prevent the rice from becoming sticky, it is customary to filter out the extra water when the rice is almost fully cooked. This sieve was meant for community meals in Gujarat. In Tamil, it is called vadikatti.

KADDU-KAS
Vegetable grater.

KADICHI/KARANDI
Ladle.

KALAM-DAVAT
An ink and pen holder, it was a common object in the household till ball-point pens arrived on the scene. It is a composite object cast in parts in brass and joined together.

KALAMDAN
A pencase originally meant to contain reed pens commonly used in India in the last two centuries.

KANKAVATI
A container from western India, used either as a woman's make-up box or for storing articles for puja (worship).

KAMANDAL
An inverted, bell-shaped copper vessel from Gujarat used for serving liquid items like dal. A kamandal is a holyman's water jug.

KAMBAL/KAMBLI
Blanket.



Traditional idli/dosa grinding stone

KANAT
Geometrically patterned cloth screens.

KANGHI
Comb.

KARPOORDANI
Small flat spoon on which camphor is ritually burnt.

KATHADAANI/CHUNADAAN
Catechu sprinkler; lime container.

KATODAN
A broad based brass container with a shallow, dome-shaped lid surmounted by a bowl (kator). The vessel is used for storing clothes; was a part of a Kutchi bride's dowry.

KHAL
A boat-shaped mortar of Gujarat made of metal and marble. Also called hamal dasta in north and east India (See Khal-Bhatta, Silvatti).

KHAL-BATTA/SILVATTI
Grinding stone.

KHAS KI TATI
Vetiver screen that cools and smells good when watered in summer.

KINDI
Small spouted jug for water.

KINNAM/KATORI/VATI
Small bowl.

KODAM, GAGGAR
Waterpot.

KOONDU/SURMEDANI
Collyrium box.

KOTHI
Jars from Gujarat. Constructed by joining together pieces of iron-sheets, they were used for storing oil or grain. In the month of Shravana, sacred to the Hindus, the oil-presser did not run his oil mill, to avoid the sin of torturing his bull. For this month the oil was pressed in advance and stored in such large containers as these. Even larger ones of the same type, often with ladles inside were used to store grain. At other times, the jar was used for storing water. Iron kothis and other containers and measuring bowls are made in Kundala, near Amreli in Saurashtra.

KUJA
Large water jug made of clay (from Persian kuza, usually for travel).

KUMKUM-DAN/CHIMIZH
Sindoor box.

MANA

Mana(Gujarat) is usually a balloon-shaped, copper pot, with a narrow neck and a small mouth. Narrators of folklore called mana bhattas or gagaria bhattas used this pot for obtaining tala:rythmical groupings of beats (See Performing Arts: Music - Ghatam). This was done by repeatedly striking their ring-clad fingers of both the hands on the body of the pot and occasionally by a thump of the palm on the small opening or the mouth of the pot. Premananda, the famous Gujarati poet of the 17th century, was a mana bhatta.

MANDAPA

Small wooden or marble stand to house figurines of deities.

MASALADAAN

Spice box.

MASHAK

A brass water bottle from Gujarat.

MATKA

A round earthen pot with a circular mouth for keeping water cool in summer.

MEZ/MEJE

Table.

MODHA

Cane/wooden stools, footstools.

NIRANJAN

Lamp which is lit only with ghee.

PAANDAN

An octagonal box for keeping and serving paan or betel leaf (See Nature: Herbs). It has five compartments for various ingredients and a shallow tray atop for betel leaves and a nutcracker.

PALADAI

Small beaked cup for feeding infants milk or medicine.

PANCHAMRIT-PATRA

Small quintuple vessel to hold milk, curds, ghee, sugar and honey.

PANCHA PATRA UTHARNI

Beaker and spoon for ladling consecrated water.

PANKHA/VISIRI

Hand fan.

PARA

A brass measuring bowl for rice from Kerala, cast in one piece. It has a solid cast ring (handle) attached to it. The ones from eastern India have triangular patterns.

PAT, PALAHA

Low wooden stool to sit on while eating or bathing or washing.

PATILA (PATRAM)

Utensil.

PETI

An elegantly designed jewellery box from Gujarat, it has a rectangular container and a 'stepped' pyramid lid fashioned from brass-sheets. The handle, the hinges, the latch and the legs are cast separately and fixed to it. The edges and the corners of the lid of the box have an outer lining of thick brass strips adorned with fine punch-marked motifs. Brass boxes with the additional features of lining of thick strips and cross-strips are known as soti vali peti in Gujarat.

PIDHA, PAT

Prayerbook stand.

PRADEEP/SAMAI/KUTHUVILAKKU

Oil lamp.

PUJA GRIHA/DEV GHAR

Prayerroom/ household shrine.

PURDAH

Curtain.

RAJAI

Quilt.

RAJAI GILAF

Quilt cover.

RASOI

Kitchen.

RUMAL

Kerchief.

SABUNDAAN, SABUN

Soap box, soap.

SAMDANI

Usually a brass bottle for keeping surma or eyeliner (See Adornment: Cosmetics - Kohl). An exquisitely embroidered 'skirt' of cotton is usually tied around it to add to its charm.

SAROTA, JANTHI

Kept as part of the paandan, a sarota or nutcracker is used to cut supari (betel-nut) into fine pieces. Professional paan eaters take pride in the gossamer thin pieces cut by them. The nutcracker is called sudi in Gujarat and jathi in Bengal.

SATTUVAM/TIRIPPI

Spatula.

SHAMIANA, PANDAL

Cloth tent for ceremonies and feasts.

SOOP/MORAM/SOPA

Winnowing tray.

SURAH

A traveller's ubiquitous 'water-bottle.' This neatly constructed clay water container with a melon-shaped pot and slim neck is traditionally used in India to keep water cool, particularly in the summer months. There are metal versions of the clay model.

SYLABCHI

Basin for washing hands.

TAKIA/TALEGANI/DINDU

Pillow.

TAKIA GILAF

Pillow case.

TAMBIA/LOTA/CHOMBU

A copper pot found all over India.

The lota is designed to suit the traditional Indian way of drinking water by pouring it into the mouth without the lips touching the vessel itself. In Gujarat it is customary to use kalasya-pyala or a flat lota and a tumbler for drinking water wherein the drinker poured some water from the lota into the tumbler and drank it. The 'Parsi lota' seems to be the single composite version of these two. Called 'chombu' in Tamil and 'chembu' in Telugu.

TAULIYA

Towel.

TEAPOY/TIPAI

Three-legged side table.

THENGA-TURUVI

Coconut grater.

URULI

Wide metal cauldron from the south.

UNJANIYUN

An iron bucket from Gujarat used by cart drivers.

This special bucket is hung under the seat of a bullock-cart driver and contains rags soaked in castor oil used from time to time to lubricate the cart.

VADHI

A brass pot from Gujarat for pouring oil or ghee.

A cast brass vessel with a flat round belly and a long neck and a spout is traditionally used all over Gujarat for serving oil or ghee at community meals. Similar ones of clay are also in vogue. In rural homes they are used in the kitchen as common oil-pots for pouring oil into the frying pans.



GEMS

Ratna

Numerous references
have been made to gems in the *Vedas*,
in the *Bhava Prakasha* and *Brihad Samhita*.
Precious stones are believed
to radiate certain energies and transmit
cosmic rays to the wearer

GEMMOLOGY

Although the gems found in India are legion, gemmologists list 84 stones and amongst them nine stones: ruby, pearl, coral, emerald, yellow or white sapphire, diamond, blue sapphire, gomedha and cat's eye, which form the esteemed Navaratna. Out of this, five are taken to be Maharatnas (most superior gems) — ruby, pearl, diamond, emerald and blue sapphire.

NAVARATNA

Although in the West, different gems have been recommended to tally with the date and month of birth, numerology and sign of the Zodiac, in Indian Astrology, it is not that simple. A number of factors have to be taken into consideration and a horoscope (janma patrika) has to be drawn up with the position of various planets and their influence during various periods in life, before gems are advised for wear. However the Navaratna (nine gems) are suitable for almost all persons. It is believed that the nine stones when worn bring one abundant wealth, happiness, renown, longevity, honour and mental peace. No weight is prescribed, as such, for the stones but the gems should be flawless and genuine. An auspicious time and day should be determined for the wearing and if necessary a havan (ritual fire) or puja performed. The gems should be set by a knowledgeable jeweller (in a particular format) either in gold or in silver.

MANIK

Ruby. Of pinkish red colour, it generally occurs in crystals of six-sided prisms. There are several attributes which decide the superiority of the ruby. For instance, if it is immersed in milk, the red rays should break the liquid. Or if it is rubbed on a stone, the stone may show signs of friction but the ruby must not lose weight. When examined in the early morning sun against a mirror, if it throws out its rays on the lower part of the mirror, the ruby is of a very high quality. If on the other hand, the stone lacks lustre, is brittle, has cracks, or is spotted, it is regarded as flawed.

MOTI

Pearls come in white, black and with tinges of yellow, blue, salmon pink, red, brown and green. The ones with a rosy sheen are the most coveted and expensive and come almost exclusively from the Persian Gulf. Although the pearl has an organic origin, it is composed of mineral matter and occurs in the pearl oyster during the two spawning seasons each year. The lustre of the pearl is dependant on the layers of the ocean beds. In India there are

two centres for pearl diving, both off the southern coast of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. A pearl is considered flawed if it has cracks on the skin, a jointed appearance, a mole, is lustreless, has mud or other material inside.

MOONGA

Coral, generally red and sindoori (vermillion) in colour. The use of the coral in jewellery dates back to the Romans who considered it auspicious worn in amulets. Because of its auspiciousness, the coral, though not a precious stone, has been given a coveted place in the Navaratna. A good coral is opaque red, is perfectly round or oval and regular; is smooth, and gives off lovely splendours. It is flawed if it is spotted, cracked, has more than one shade of colour or the surface is in any way depressed or twisted.

PANNA

Emerald. Velvety green in colour, most emeralds are marred by cracks and inclusions which greatly decrease their value. A flawless emerald, like a flawless ruby, is extremely rare and precious. The stone was known as early as in the days of Pliny, (ancient Roman writer), for he writes, "Neither dimness nor shade, nor yet the light of a candle causes them to lose their lustre." The Udaipur emerald has a dark green colour but is brittle. The Ajmer emerald is of a paler shade. The most coveted emerald is that which is radiant and smooth and has neither cracks nor dots.

PUKHRAJ

Yellow or white sapphire, also called pushparaj. The stone in its purest form should have eight qualities: it must feel heavy when placed on the palm of the hand, appear clean, pure, be free of spots, should be solid with no layers, have a yellow hue, feel smooth to touch and its radiance must improve when rubbed on a testing stone. A pushparaj with blemishes like a blackish tinge, asymmetry, spots or a whitish-yellow colouring is regarded inauspicious and is not used in jewellery.

HEERA

There is a belief that diamonds are of three kinds: male, female and eunuch, of which the male is considered the best. Another opinion is that diamonds should be graded according to their structural beauty and radiance as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The diamond which reflects the colours of the rainbow, is light and round but exhibits all its eight facets and is without lines or dots is a male diamond. A defective or blemished diamond is said to cause great harm.

NEELAM

Blue sapphire. The best sapphires come from Kashmir and are called 'mayur neelam', peacock blue. Its most important quality is that it does not change colour in electric light but instead throws off a navy blue. An auspicious sapphire should be brilliant and radiant, transparent, soft to touch and give off rays from within. The blue sapphire however, is not said to suit all temperaments and may not be universally auspicious despite its purity.

GOMEDHA

Has the colour of red smoke or honey. Also called zircon, chemically it is a silicate of zirconium and crystals and occurs either as a four-sided prism or as water pebbles. To be considered auspicious, the stone should reflect a pure colour, be homogeneous and soft to touch. If it shows a blackish light, is rough to touch and looks like a piece of yellow glass, the gomedha is not auspicious. The best gomedha comes from Sri Lanka. In India the stone is found in Kashmir, Bihar, Kulu, Shimla and Coimbatore.

LAHASUNIA

Cat's eye. Also called Sutramani, it is either yellow or blackish in colour with a shining band inside, which moves when the stone is turned. In India the gem is found in Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala). The more brilliant and straight the inside band, the more superior the stone. The ones that have a depression, spots, web or dullness are considered flawed and inauspicious.

MYTHOLOGY

According to Hindu mythology there are three kinds of gems — those that belong to swarga loka (heaven), to patala loka (hell) and to mrityu loka (valley of the dead). Under swarga loka there are four gems:

Chintamani is white. This is worn by Brahma and all his successes are attributed to the gem.

Kaustubhamani (which has the colours of a lotus flower and the brilliance of the sun's rays) adorns Vishnu.

Rudramani (the golden coloured stone) is worn by Mahadeva.

Syamantakamani is a brilliant blue gem, worn by Indra.

The serpents that inhabit patala loka have their own precious gems in black, blue, yellow, green, white, red, pink and milky colours. All precious and semi-precious stones known on earth are those of mrityu loka.

BIRTH STONES

Gems are prescribed for wear in accordance with a person's date of birth and the particular Sun sign that they fall in (See Cosmos: Astrology). Opinions on this vary greatly and individuals are advised against investing in a precious or semi-precious stone unless they firmly believe in their efficacy.

Date of Birth	Birth stone
15 April - 14 May	Red Coral
15 May - 14 June	Diamond
15 Jun - 14 July	Emerald
15 July - 14 Aug	Pearl
15 Aug - 14 Sept	Ruby/Amethyst
15 Sept - 14 Oct	Emerald
15 Oct - 14 Nov	Diamond
15 Nov - 14 Dec	Red Coral
15 Dec - 14 Jan	Yellow Sapphire
15 Jan - 14 Feb	Blue Sapphire
15 Feb - 14 Mar	Gomedha
15 Mar - 14 April	Cat's eye

SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES

Aabri: a black-coloured stone.

Ahwa: rose coloured.

Alaimani: brown in colour, belongs to the Suleimani family. The word translates as 'temple bell' in Tamil.

Amleeya: dark rose, used for making mortars.

Banshi: a soft, green stone.

Bairooz: aquamarine, light green.

Chandrakantamani: or godanta or moon stone, as the names suggest, has the colour of a white cloud or the tooth of a cow. There is a glistening band which rolls when the stone is turned.

Chitti: golden-coloured, with a stripe.

Dana phirang: kidney stone, light green in colour.

Darchana: colour of the yellow pulse.

Dhedi: black, used for making crockery.

Door: dark brown, also used for making mortar.

Dantla: yellow.

Durvenjph: colour of unripe paddy.

Ghunela: smoky quartz, also gold in colour.

Gouri: comes in various colours, often has white stripes, used for making measuring weights for jewellers.

Halan: its pink colour moves when the stone is moved.

Haqiq-al-bahar: has a watery source and is greenish-yellow.

Haqiq: agate, found in various colours, the stone is inexpensive and long lasting; very

auspicious for Muslim saints, also regarded as a birth stone.

Hazrat-e-ood: black, Unani medicine uses it for making eye medicines.

Haree: black-brownish, used for making rosaries.

Hawas: green with a golden tinge.

Jabarjad: light green peridot.

Jamuniya or kataila: amethyst, light or dark purple in colour, also a birth stone (See Birth Stones).

Jajemani: also of the Suleimani family, brown in colour with a white stripe.

Jhana: a very soft stone which even water can destroy.

Kehruva: amber, dull wheatish.

Kasauti: lit. tough stone, used to test the purity of gold.

Kamala: dull white with a green tinge.

Khara: greenish, used for making mortar.

Kudrat: black with yellow and white spots.

Lalri: the colour of the rose, also called gulabi.

Ludhia: red stone.

Lajvart: lapis lazuli; a soft blue stone known in the West as the blue sapphire.

Laroo: a kind of marvar stone (See Marvar).

Liliar: black, used in mortar.

Mariyam: of shining white colour.

Makanatees: lodestone, also called chakmak, its colour ranges from white to black.

Margaj: jade, green inexpensive opaque stone with astrological significance.

Marvar: in three colours, red white and off-white.

Makra: meaning spider, the black stone has the impress of a spider's web.

Moosa: dusty white, used for making bowls.

Naram: a dark yellow-red spinel ruby.

Neeli: a soft stone which resembles the blue sapphire.

Phiroza: turquoise.

Pitania: bloodstone, green with blood red spots.

Panghan: black, used for making toys.

Para zahar: colour of white bamboo, has great medicinal properties, heals wounds quickly.

Parasmani: a legendary stone very rarely seen, it is said to have the ability to turn base metals into gold. Alchemist's stone of western legends.

Romni: soft black-red stone.

Rawaat: red and blue, both with medicinal properties.

Sitara: gold stone; orange red with specks of gold, very soft and brittle.

Sphatik: rock crystal, shining white. Cut finely, this resembles white topaz.



Bridal jewellery, precious stones set in gold

Sindooria: light pink.
 Savore: green with a brown stripe.
 Sangsan: white jade, has the hue of grapes.
 Seejri: white with the impress of a tree.
 Sang-basri: used for making surma, a cosmetic to line the eyes (See Adornment: Cosmetics).
 Sangeeya: white stone.
 Sifri: a mixture of green and sky blue.
 Seengli: belongs to the ruby family but is softer and less expensive, the colour tending towards black.
 Seeya: black, often used for sculpture.
 Seemak: red with a yellowish tinge, used for making mortar in which medicines are triturated.
 Seer khadi: gypsum, dusty appearance, used for making toys.
 Sohan makhkhi: looks like white clay, considered effective in curing urinary troubles.
 Surma: lit. kohl, to line the eyes, black (See Sang-basri).
 Sunehla: topaz, also called citrine; golden topaz is most attractive.
 Suleimani: black with a white stripe.
 Turmali: tourmaline, soft stone in a range of colours, has great astrological significance.
 Tamda: garnet, black, red or maroon, a most popular semi-precious stone.
 Tursawa: soft yellow-red.
 Upal: opal, a popular multi-hued sparkling gem.

MEDICINAL USES

Ayurveda and to some extent Unani (both Indian branches of science using natural curative methods) lay great emphasis on the use of gem stones in medicinal preparations. They are used both as ashes (bhasma) as well as in powder (pishti) form for treatment of critical ailments. The procedures for preparing these medicines are time-consuming and complicated. All medication however, should be under strict supervision and advice of a qualified Ayurvedic or Unani physician. The gems are listed in alphabetical order.

Agate: Used with kewra, a strong-smelling flower extract (See Nature: Trees/Plants), it is said to strengthen the heart, cure fainting fits, alleviate liver troubles, bleeding and diseases caused by stones in parts of the body. It also rejuvenates, physically and mentally.

Amber: Cures all disorders caused by wind, bile and phlegm in the body. Also relieves colic pain.

Bloodstone: Used in powder form, it cures bilious troubles. Paste is applied to remove eruptions caused by excess bile (pitti).

Blue Sapphire: Broken pieces are triturated (ground in a pestle and mortar) in rose, kewra and water. The smooth paste is administered orally to cure fevers, epilepsy, insanity and hiccups.

Cat's eye: Used as a pisthi after it is triturated in kewra water, to treat problems caused by excess of phlegm, cough and piles. The bhasma provides vitality and strength and cures certain eye diseases.

Coral: A paste obtained by rubbing coral in a mortar with rose or kewra water, is believed to avert abortion when applied on the navel of a pregnant woman. If coral is triturated in rose water and dried and then taken with honey it provides strength to the body. When taken with a betel leaf (paan) it cures cough and phlegm.

Diamond: Powdered diamond is absolutely forbidden for oral use. Only its ashes (bhasma) strictly prepared under supervision are prescribed. The bhasma gives relief and cures tuberculosis, insanity (of certain kinds), dropsy, diabetes, ulcers in the anus, anaemia and inflammation. It is said to prolong life if taken over a period of time and gives one a radiant appearance. If a piece of the gem should get into the stomach by accident, immediate steps should be taken to have it vomited out, for diamonds can cut the intestines and cause death.

Emerald: Triturated in rose or kewra water, it is used for urinary troubles and diseases of the heart. The bhasma provides coolness to the body and controls nausea, asthma, indigestion, piles and jaundice.

Gomedha: Triturated in rose, kewra or red musk water, it helps colic, skin diseases and piles.

Kidney stone: Wearing the stone itself is said to give relief from colic pains. The same effect is had by applying the paste by rubbing the stone in rose water on the affected area.

Lapis Lazuli: According to *Rasa Ratna Samuchhya* (an authoritative medical text) the bhasma of this gem cures 20 kinds of urinary troubles, diabetes, tuberculosis, jaundice and problems of wind and phlegm.

Opal: *Ruchya ishdushno jwarapaha* translates as "the opal improves the taste, somewhat hot, and helps cure fevers."

Pearl: A good pearl (not pierced) triturated in rose or kewra water, made into paste, dried and taken orally, is very beneficial for diseases caused by calcium deficiency. The ashes provide relief to body heat, are good for the eyes and cure tuberculosis, chronic fevers, cough, breathing problems, palpitation, high blood pressure, heart ailments, exhaustion and weaknesses.

Garnet: Has the same properties as the ruby but is not as effective. The bhasma stops bleeding and melts stones in the kidney, urinary bladder and gall bladder.

Ruby: Used both in ash and powder form, it is said to produce more blood and improve circulation. Cures problems caused by excess wind and disorders of the stomach, prolongs life. The bhasma has the ability to suppress wind, bile and phlegm in the body, give relief in tuberculosis, colic pain, eye diseases, leprosy and impotency. The ashes also relieve excessive heat and burning sensations.

Tourmaline: Acts like the diamond for the cure of jaundice, disorders of the stomach, fever, breathing troubles and diabetes. It is also believed to help strengthen the mind.

White sapphire: Triturated in rose or kewra water, the paste is dried and used to relieve nausea, wind problems, phlegm, stomach disorders, indigestion, leprosy and piles.



HANDICRAFT

Hasta Shilpa

Indian handicrafts and handlooms are testimony to the amazing creativity of the artisan and an ethnic revival has focused attention on handmade artefacts

BAMBOO

Basketry is a very popular craft in many parts of the country. Bengal has both the coiled as well as the plaited basket. Assam weaves its korahi and jaki, both exquisite baskets. Umbrella handles are another speciality. Tripura is known for its screens made of split bamboo. Chowpals and maslond are among the most intricate mats woven in Bengal. The long panthi mats can seat up to a 100 people at a feast. Orissa makes use of the stem of the khuskhus (poppy) plant to make a range of lovely trinkets. Manipur makes the black and white chequered chests called chembong to store clothes. The same chest of Kerala is known as mulapatty but it has twill-worked bands at the bottom and white chains on the lid over a black background. The palm leaf has been transformed with great skill into a number of utility items in the southernmost districts of Tamil Nadu like Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram where delicate baskets, screens, handbags and fruit trays look like works of art.

In Pondicherry, mats are woven with local korai grass and Kerala is known for its reed items, especially baskets and mats. This grass, growing wild by the riverside in Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu helps produce some of the finest mats in the country. Cane or rattan, as it is called, is a climbing palm. The stem is used to make sticks and furniture. Uttar Pradesh is known for its bamboo cane and raffia (another wild grass) work. Jute cloth, made in Bengal, once used only for rough packing is now used as a base for embroidered curtains, table mats, bags, clothes and floor coverings.

CARPETS

The best kaleens or carpets are the ones from Kashmir, the Barajasta and Bokhara being the most popular. Agra is one of the oldest carpet-weaving centres with its oriental designs – the Indo-Ispahan and Indo-Kashan. Amritsar in Punjab makes the Mauri carpets. Some Muslim families in Eluru in Andhra Pradesh claim to be direct descendants of the Persian migrants and still weave in the old style but give them local colour and names. The Warangal weavers have their own designs like Mahbub Khani, Teerandas Khani and Thotti Khani. Kalimpong has grown into a centre for Tibetan carpets. Durries or cotton carpets also form a major industry and are an excellent substitute for the woolen carpet.

GLASS

It was the Mughals who discovered the decorative potential of glass, the fact that when it is cut, it has the opalescence and the



Colourful leather bag

glitter of a myriad diamonds. Articles like bowls, attar (perfume) containers and other ornamental showpieces came to be fashioned out of glass.

Glass engravings from India exported to Europe till the 16th century are said to have influenced the Venetians. Today this art has declined but glass items like phials, jars, bottles and other utility articles are still part of the everyday scene. Ferozabad in UP has entire communities involved in bangle making. Hyderabad bangles, finely crafted and multi-hued are used as bridal ornaments. Varanasi specialises in glass beads and tiklis (thin glass cutouts, a forehead ornament for women). Saharanpur makes glass toys filled with coloured liquid called panchkora. In Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu, and in Karnataka and Maharashtra, glass paintings make decorative wall-pictures. Though most of these are based on religion, other ostentatious themes are also presented. Even two decades ago, one could see in traditional homes in the south, coloured tubes of glass strung together to form torans. In Rajasthan, mirrors are made, especially in Jaipur, with the local saline soil.

HORN

Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Honavar and Belgaum in Karnataka, Tiruvananthapuram in Kerala, Cuttack, Parlakimidi in Orissa and Sarai Taran in UP are some of the well-known centres for hornwork. The most common items made of horn are the combs, some of them ornately carved and encrusted with jewels. Other items are toys, buttons, trays, cigarette cases, ash-trays, lamps and common everyday things.

IVORY

Ivory, now a banned commodity, has been used for various purposes from sacred images to dice. Popular items like chess sets, knife handles, bookmarks, eartops, bangles and rings are made of ivory. Karnataka and Kerala are centres for highly individual ivory carving.

LEATHER

It may be said that leather work in India is as widespread as earthenware, for there is no village in the country where there is not a cobbler. Entire families are involved in footwear making. Traditional and colourful footwear is found in Rajasthan where mojdis (embroidered shoes) are made with applique, beads and other fancy embellishments. Low leather seats (pidis or moras) with decorative designs are made in Bengal. Kashmir leads in making leather garments and in Andhra Pradesh, puppets are made of leather (See Performing Arts: Puppetry – Tholubommala).

METAL

The Konarak Sun Temple (Orissa) and the Qutub Minar are two of the finest examples of the antiquity and durability of ironworks in India. Copper and bronze were the earliest non-ferrous metals which man shaped into tools. The *Matsya Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranas) describes the casting of bronze images at the beginning of the Christian era. Metal ware today may be divided into religious images, ritualistic items and objects of utility. Bell metal is used in cooking-ware for it does not tarnish. This is found in Kerala and Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu). Assam makes shorahi and donari articles for ritualistic use; Manipur makes the distinctive dish called Krishna kanti. Gujarat and Uttar

Pradesh are known for their brass and copper items like lotas, panchapatra, tamra patra, sinhasan and kanchanthal used for puja or worship (See Food: Utensils). Bengal is renowned for its brass tumblers and kitchenware. A most crucial item of Rajasthan, a water carrier made of zinc is called badla (cloud, to signify water).

Icons are the best examples of metal items of worship. The *Shilpashastra's* elaborate treatise on bronze icon casting is meticulously followed. Since the times of the *Rig Veda* (See Religion: Hinduism) two casting processes are adhered to – ghana (solid) and sushira (hollow). Tamil Nadu is known for its statues in metal made by traditional craftsmen known as stapathis. The most important icon is the Nataraja in the tandava nritya pose (See Performing Arts: Dance – Bharata Natyam). Kerala and Bengal are also centres for icon making. Lamps, unique to each part of the country again are excellent examples of metal craft in India, beginning with the stambha, the heavily carved, temple lamp, to the kumbha lamp (decorated with a cobra and baby Krishna) and the ornamental hanging lamps in myriad designs. An unusual metal craft, a mirror, made of an alloy of copper and tin, comes from Aranmula in Kerala. The artisans are said to have stumbled on this when they were once making a crown for their deity. The temple chief was so pleased, he included the mirror among the eight auspicious items used in worship. The deity is now popularly known as the idol of the mirror.

Metal has been put to artistic use with techniques such as applique, inlaying and enamelling. Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu has evolved a technique of encrusting metal on metal. Delhi is known for its ornamental plate with the paildar or pie crust pattern. Bidri of Karnataka (from Bidar village) uses an alloy of zinc, copper, tin and lead. The design is drawn with a sharp chisel and then the silver wire is embedded into it. Tarkashi is the brass metal inlay work of Mainpur in Uttar Pradesh. Rajasthan and Gujarat are known for their silver carving, specially the gulabposh, an ornamental rose-water sprinkler. The filigree work of Orissa is world renowned, the thin silver wire woven like gauze to form jewellery and other trinkets.

PAPIER MACHE

A comparatively new craft in India which has caught on very well in many parts of the country since the raw material is easily available and inexpensive. Kashmir produces some of the most beautifully hand-crafted papier mache items both of utility



A final stroke

and ornamental value. Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh makes papier mache toys, while in Ujjain figures of popular deities are made of this material. Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Madras also make characteristic papier mache articles.

POTTERY

Apart from commercial and sociological implications, pottery in India has deep religious significance. For instance, if no image of a deity is available for worship, a water pitcher is brought in and worshipped as 'mangalghat' (good omen). It is impossible to list all the centres of pottery or for that matter the utility of other objects fashioned out of clay. The commonest piece is the kulhar, an all-purpose jug. The matka is used for storing grain and when reinforced, for churning curd. In Bengal, the water jug, surahi (See Food: Utensils), is made up of four pieces joined together, with a decorated disc for the top and one for the base. The neck alone is made on the wheel. Gods and Goddesses are made of clay during particular festivals like Durga Puja in Bengal and Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra (See Festivals). Then there are gram devtas (village deities) regularly created by the local craftsmen. Terracotta sculptures in temples and toys are found in all parts of India (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

Delhi is known for its blue pottery which is almost translucent. The Jaipur blue pottery is even more unique with its arabesque patterns. Alwar in Rajasthan makes paper-thin, kagzi pottery. Pokhran has pottery in different shapes with white

and red etchings. Khurja in UP to this day has pottery as its main activity, its speciality being the pilgrims' pitcher, decorated in relief. Chinhat and Mausalia now specialise in glazedware for modern, everyday use. Kangra in Himachal Pradesh has mainly black and red wares like gidya (jug) for milk or ghee, patri (bowl) for holding curd or butter and narele (a coconut-shaped tobacco-smoking pot). Belgaum district of Karnataka is known for its large-sized containers, excellent for long-term storing. Natural white wares are the speciality of Vidi, a small village in Kutch. Saurashtra has a clay called gopichand because it resembles chandan (sandalwood).

Potters from Gujarat now settled in Bombay make functional items like the flower pots modelled on the Tulsi platform, or Diwali lamps styled for a temple structure which are attractive and popular. Kashmir gives its pottery a glazed surface. The hookah base was once its symbol but today it has switched over to modern tableware with its glaze resembling batik (See Visual Arts: Design – Textiles). Goa has figurines of earthenware with a velvety finish. The black and red pottery of Vellore and Usilampatti of Tamil Nadu are painted over with a yellow substance. Panruti is known for its toys and figures of deities. The pottery of Karaikurichi of Tamil Nadu is technically superior with a rich red ochre coating. Their popular items are water jugs with a cow face for a snout, a jug with a lion head and a circular jar with a wheel design called the Ashoka-wheel jar.





SHELL

Tortoise-shell, like ivory, is in short supply. Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh is a prominent centre for tortoise-shell trinket boxes embellished with ivory. Finely-carved filigree of ivory covers the tortoise-shell boxes. Bowls, vases, teapots and even the hookah is fashioned out of this shell for which there is a good foreign market. There are different centres in Kerala where coconut-shell articles are made. For ages the conch has been a symbol of religious importance and ornaments made of conch have been in use, especially bangles, which for women of certain communities, especially in Bengal, is a symbol of marriage like the mangalsutra (auspicious chain) in the south and Maharashtra.

SHOLA PITH

Shola is a herbaceous plant growing wild in marshy and water-logged areas. The shola pith is used in Bengal for artistic decorations and for making headgear for deities at festivals. The Bengali groom and bride wear a crown made of pith called mukut during the wedding ceremony. Craftsmen of Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu make remarkable reproductions of well-known temples in pith.

STONE

India has a great variety of rock and stone. Magnificent stone monuments are seen all over the country (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). The articles made of stone are usually for domestic use. The thali (plate), bati (saucer) and pradeep (lamps) are some of the more popular stoneware. Varanasi has a busy stone-carving centre. Tableware, plates, glasses, bowls and food containers are made here. Agra is famous for its work in marble. Apart from the models of the Taj Mahal, other ornamental articles like boxes, pitchers, lamps and bowls are beautifully carved in marble. Inlay work on marble is also done here, at times studded with semi-precious stones. Vrindavan in UP produces marble as well as alabaster articles. Jhansi fashions lamp-shades, incense-stick holders and medicine grinders (kharals) out of its local dark-brown stone called sangerathak.

Patharkatti in Bihar has blue-black pot stone from which images and household items are made. Buddhist images are a speciality. Tamil Nadu has a great tradition of stone-work, particularly in making icons. There is a convention that when an image is made, the eyes are carved out last, for that is when the figure assumes its identity. The staptis, as the image workers are called, also engage in temple construction and repair work. The main

centres are Tirunelveli, Ramanathapuram, Tiruchirapalli and Kanyakumari. Traditional icon-making in Tamil Nadu has been given a new lease of life with the establishment of a training centre at Mahabalipuram for instructions in *Shilpa Shashtra* (sculpting art, See Archaeology/Architecture; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). In Rajasthan, the tamra stone of Sawai Madhopur is used in images. Puri in Orissa is a centre for soap-stone figurines in dance poses decorated with jewellery. Belaghat in Madhya Pradesh uses its green stone to make small items like animals, boxes and images. Kerala's rich granite is used for structures and images. At Kangra in Himachal Pradesh the Pahari style (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture) is still alive in their distinct stone images.

TOYS AND DOLLS

From earliest times, various materials have been used to make playthings for children. Traditional toys (kridana) have also been sold at fairs and festivals. The oldest toys date back to 5,000 years ago, from the sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation (See Archaeology/Architecture; History; Visual Arts). Each region is known for its typical toys. Varanasi, Lucknow, Mathura and Vrindavan are reputed for their brightly painted lacquered wood toys, Orissa for its painted wooden toys, Tirupati for its dampati (man, woman) toys. In the eastern terracotta belt, the theme of mother and child models is popular. Rajasthan makes toys of unbaked clay, Assam and West Bengal fashion toys out of pith. In Madhubani, toys are made of sikki, a grass. Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh makes some of the best traditional toys out of a mixture of cowdung, sawdust and clay and covers them with lustrous pigments.

WOOD

India has a luxuriant range of wood. Kashmir produces a number of articles from furniture to fruit bowls in walnut wood. Gujarat is rich in structural wood-carving. Navkhanja and tran khanja are two of their well-known carved cupboards. Assam is known for its wooden structures, namghar or kirtanghar. Punjab specialises in furniture. Uttar Pradesh has a range of household goods. Madurai (Tamil Nadu) is known for its rosewood carvings; Tirupati is noted for its rakthachandan (blood-coloured sandalwood) figurines. Karnataka and to some extent Kerala carve sandalwood figures. Karnataka is also known for its rosewood items.

WOVEN TEXTILES

COTTON

The legendary muslin has not quite become a myth, for superfine yarn including khadi still continues to be produced in Madhubani in north Bihar and Ponduru in Andhra Pradesh. The fly shuttle is used commonly in weaving. Cotton sari weaving centres exist in almost every part of the country, and each kind of sari has its own individual character and style. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh (where Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar designed a local sari), Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bengal and Uttar Pradesh produce some of the finest handwoven saris. The jamdani of Uttar Pradesh, where weaving is carried out with the intricacy of tapestry and brocaded cotton material like the himroo and mashru (which originated as courtly dress material for the Muslims) deserve special mention. Some of the finest cotton saris and dhotis are made in Venkatagiri, Andhra Pradesh.

SILK

Varanasi and Kanchipuram are two of the best-known centres for silk weaving. The kinkhab (brocade) of Gujarat, the tanchoi of Surat (originally the process was brought in from China by the three Choi brothers, hence tanchoi), patola of Gujarat and Orissa, paithani of Maharashtra, the endi, musa, and pala silk of Assam and the ikat (both silk and cotton weave) of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the other well-known silk weaves.

WOOL

The use of wool being limited, woolweaving is restricted. The shawl is one of the best-known wool woven items. Made of pashmina (wool from the underbelly of a Himalayan goat) it is soft and silky, fine-textured and extremely warm. The shahtoosh of Kashmir is a shawl so fine and soft that, it can be slipped through a ring. The Himalayan region is the greatest shawl producing area, with the jamavar woven like tapestry. Other woollen articles include the kambroodar, a special pyjama for men of Himachal Pradesh, the dohru, a garment worn by women of the Kulu valley and gudmas which are fluffy blankets.

(For hand printing and textile painting see Visual Arts: Design.)



HISTORY

Itihaas

The medieval and modern periods in Indian history are well documented by the Mughals and the British, who earned the sobriquet, *Kagazi Raj*, the rule of paper, with their methodical records. Reconstructing the long span of 5,000 years, through coins, edicts and assorted relics of a turbulent past, is a continuous and exciting process

CHRONOLOGY

2300 -1750 BC: The Indus Valley Civilization or the 'Harappan Culture' in Punjab, Sind and areas of Rajasthan and Kathiawar discovered in the 1920s, suggests a highly 'urbanized' civilization noted for its town-planning.

1500 BC: The arrival of the Indo-Aryans, a branch of the Indo-Europeans in the north-west. A pastoral, cattle-breeding people they settled in the Punjab and the Gangetic valley as far south as the Vindhya. The *Rig Veda*, a collection of songs of prayers, hymns and ritual prescriptions, originates from this period.

600 BC: This period sees the rise of monarchies and republics in northern India. Various religious sects also arise with Buddhism and Jainism acquiring the status of major religions.

327 BC: Alexander of Macedon campaigns in north-western India. His premature death prevents the consolidation of his Indian exploits.

321 BC: The Mauryan empire, the first form of 'imperial' government in India takes root. Chandragupta Maurya establishes power and hegemony in central and north-west India.

273 BC: Ashoka, one of India's greatest monarchs, ascends the throne. After his successful conquest of Kalinga, he denounces war and embraces Buddhism. A variety of sources suggest a centralised, highly efficient administration and bureaucracy and flourishing trade and craft.

200 BC-200 AD: A series of Indo-Greek invasions take place. Indo-Greek King Menander conquers areas in Punjab and Mathura near Delhi. An intermingling of Greek and Indian cultures leads to the famous Gandhara School of Sculpture (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture – Gandhara Sculpture).

180 BC: Mauryan power declines. Its disintegration gives rise to a number of small kingdoms such as the Sunga dynasty in Magadha and central India and Kalinga under its ruler Kharavela.

57 BC: Entry of the Sakas, a foreign tribe from central Asia, on the central scene.

87-144 AD: The Kushan dynasty, one of the significant phases in the cultural development of northern India, begins its reign. The Mathura School of Art flourishes (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). Kanishka, one of its greatest kings, rules over his kingdom from Purushapura (Peshawar, now in Pakistan).

106-130: Ascent of the Satavahana power in the Deccan – the successors of the Mauryans in that region. Rock-cut caves and Buddhist stupas belong to this period (See Archaeology/Architecture).

320: Chandragupta I founds the Gupta dynasty which is often referred to as the Classical Age or the Golden Age of India (See Archaeology/Architecture; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). During his reign Hindu culture is firmly established in northern India. His successor, Samudragupta, consolidates the Gupta power and hegemony and pushes it further south.

375-415: Samudragupta's son, Chandragupta II, also known as Vikramaditya defeats the Sakas in western India. Fa Hien, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, visits India during this period and paints a glowing and comprehensive account of the country. Under the Guptas art and literature flourish and scholars and poets like Kalidasa and Amarasingha are patronised. Ajanta paintings, the greatest of Buddhist art, also come from this period (See Literature; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

600-630: In the south several important kingdoms emerge, with the Pallavas and Chalukyas being the most prominent. This is followed by a period of conflict in which the Pallavas under Narasimhavarman defeat the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. The famous rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram belong to this period (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Temples; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

606-647: Rise of Harshavardhana or Harsha of the Pushyabhuti dynasty. Making Kanauj the seat of his power he extends his authority in north India. A detailed account of this period survives in the writing of court poet Banabhatta's *Harshacharitra* (See Literature).

900: Anangpal, a Rajput ruler, builds Lal Kot, said to be the first city of Delhi.

907: Parantaka I, the Chola ruler establishes Chola power in the south. Rajendra I succeeds and continues the policy of expansion. The Chola period is known for its architecture and for its bronze sculptures and figurines (See Literature).

1001: Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni begins his raids from the northern frontier. He attacks 70 times in a period of 17 years and paves the way for the rule of the Turks and Afghans in India. Muhammad Ghori also conducts vigorous campaigns of expansion into northern India towards the end of the 12th century.

1206: Muhammad Ghori is murdered and

his general Qutub-ud-din Aibak assumes control of his Indian possessions. This lays the foundation of what is known as the Delhi Sultanate.

1211-86: Aibak's son-in-law Iltutmish rules. To him goes the credit of firmly establishing the Turkish rule. He completes the famous monument Qutub Minar.

1266: Balban ascends the throne and consolidates the power of the Delhi Sultanate.

1296-1316: Ala-ud-din Khilji (or Khalji) rules. His reign marks the highest point of the Sultanate's political power in terms of extent of empire and authority of the Sultan. He lays the foundation of the second city of Delhi, Siri.

1320: Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq wrests power and establishes a new dynasty, the Tughlaqs. The third city of Delhi, Tughlaqabad, is raised by him.

1325-51: Muhammed-bin-Tughlaq reigns. An innovative ruler, he is regarded by historians as a visionary whose fantastic ideas were out of tune with the times. He builds Jahanpanah, the fourth city, between Lal Kot and Siri.

1351: Firoz Shah Tughlaq, known for his benevolent measures, succeeds to the throne. He builds Firozabad, the fifth city, on the western banks of the Yamuna. After him the power and influence of the Sultanate start to decline.

1398: Timur, the dreaded Turk, attacks India and strikes the last blow to the Tughlaq dynasty. The Tughlaqs are succeeded by the Sayyids who only just manage to keep the Sultanate going.

1451-1596: The Lodis of Afghan descent rule. This period sees inter-tribal rivalries which finally lead to the eclipse of the dynasty.

1526: Babur, a descendant of Timur, invades India. He lays the foundation of the Mughal rule in India.

1540: Babur dies and is succeeded by his son Humayun who establishes the foundation of the sixth city, Din Panah, at the site of Shergharh, Sher Shah's city.

1556: Akbar becomes the emperor and the Mughal dynasty soars to new heights. The greatest of the Mughal kings, he abolishes jazia, a religious tax and marries a Rajput princess, Jodha Bai, the sister of Raja Man Singh, in an effort to bring different religious groups together. Twenty-six years after assuming power, he begins construction of his famous capital, Fatehpur Sikri, and promulgates his religion, Din Ilahi.

1600: The London East India Company is granted charter. Other colonial powers make inroads into India.

1605: The United East India Company of the Netherlands is formed and four years later the Dutch Company is established at Pulicat in Tamil Nadu. In 1613, Jehangir grants firman (permission) to the English East India Company and they begin trade with Bengal soon after.

1630: Shivaji, the greatest of the Maratha rulers, who would later harass both the British and the declining Mughal empire, is born in Maharashtra.

1638: Shah Jahan, the fifth Mughal ruler, lays the foundation for Shahjahanabad, the seventh city, with the Red Fort at Delhi as its citadel.

1666: The greatest of the Mughal architects, Shah Jahan, who constructed the beautiful Taj Mahal at Agra and the Red Fort at Delhi dies. In 1707, with the death of his son Aurangzeb, the Mughal empire begins to disintegrate.

1739: Nadir Shah, a Persian ruler, invades Delhi and takes away the Mughal Peacock throne amidst much violence and killing.

1744: Frenchman Joseph Francois Dupleix is appointed governor of Pondicherry in the south. In east India, the English capture Chandernagore. With the battle of Arcot near Madras in 1751 the domination of the French is broken. In 1757: Robert Clive is appointed governor of Bengal.

1769-70: The great Bengal famine occurs. The estimates of dead vary from three to ten million.

1773: British rule in India gains ascendancy. The Permanent Settlement of land revenue, whereby a fixed amount is taken as tax from the peasants, is signed between the rulers of Bengal and the British.

1801: Karnataka becomes part of the British empire.

1839: Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore known as 'Lion of Punjab' dies after founding a Sikh kingdom.

1853: Railway link from Bombay to Thane introduced in India for the first time and also for the first time Indians are allowed to sit for the Indian Civil Service in open competition with the British.

1857: Sepoy revolt at Meerut breaks out. It is the first expression of unrest by the suppressed Indians which spreads all over north India.

1876: Queen Victoria is proclaimed Empress of India.

1885: The Indian National Congress is formed. A British civil servant, A.O. Hume, founds the party, W.C. Bonnerji, a Calcutta barrister, is appointed its first president. Several prominent Indians like Dadabhai



Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Naoroji attend the Bombay meeting.

1905: The British partition Bengal in an effort to break the national movement but are unsuccessful and cannot cope with the patriotic upsurge. Khudiram Bose, 18, gives vent to the growing anti-British feelings by throwing a bomb which kills two British women in Bengal in 1908. He is sentenced to death.

1911: King George V holds a coronation durbar at Delhi and proclaims the shifting of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi.

1930: The anti-British campaign gathers momentum in India. A salt march is held in Dandi, Gujarat, to break salt laws and many people are arrested. Gandhiji begins the Civil Disobedience Movement and is arrested. A round table conference is held in England to discuss India's Independence.

1940: M.A. Jinnah in a presidential address at the Lahore session of the All India Muslim League demands a separate home-

land for Muslims and passes a resolution for creation of Pakistan.

1942: Quit India Resolution is passed by the Congress Working Committee. In Bangkok, Subhash Chandra Bose forms the Indian National Army and General Mohan Singh is appointed commander-in-chief.

1945: Interim government is formed in India but Jinnah reiterates his demand for a separate Muslim state and refuses to join the interim government.

1947: Partition of India results in a blood-bath. The Indian dominion is established at midnight August 15 and Jawaharlal Nehru is appointed first prime minister.

1948: 'The father of the nation,' Mahatma Gandhi, is shot dead at a prayer meeting by Nathu Ram Godse. The nation is plunged into gloom. Lord Louis Mountbatten, India's first governor-general, leaves for England and Dr C. Rajagopalachari is appointed in his place.



The Indian tricolour flutters over the Red Fort at Delhi

1950: India is proclaimed a Sovereign Democratic Republic on January 26. Dr. Rajendra Prasad becomes president of the Indian Republic.

1962: In October, China launches a massive attack on India in Ladakh and other north-eastern areas. On November 21, a ceasefire is announced. India suffers a humiliating defeat and she decides to strengthen her armed forces.

1964: Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, dies. Lal Bahadur Shastri is elected leader of the Congress Party and sworn in as the second prime minister.

1965: Indo-Pak conflict results when Pakistan invades Indian territory. The Soviet Union invites leaders from both sides for talks to resolve differences. Within hours of signing the agreement with the Pakistan President at Tashkent in 1966, Shastri dies on Soviet soil on 24th January, Indira Gandhi is sworn in as prime minister.

1971: Second Indo-Pak conflict in December ends in the surrender of Pakistani troops to the Indian army in Dacca. Bangladesh is born and an agreement is signed with India for unified military command.

1975: After the Allahabad High Court set aside Indira Gandhi's electioneering practices, a state of Emergency is declared by her. Opposition leaders and dissident Congressmen are arrested. Later, the Supreme Court upholds Indira Gandhi's election.

1977: Indira Gandhi loses the March elections. Congress Party is routed. The opposition parties who unite under the banner of the Janata Party form the first non-Congress government with Morarji Desai as prime minister. The rift in the Janata Party

in 1979 causes Morarji Desai to step down and Charan Singh becomes leader of the coalition government.

1980: Elections are held and Indira Gandhi and those who stayed loyal to her return with a thumping majority. Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's younger son, is appointed secretary of the Congress but he dies in an airplane crash soon after in June.

1984: Demand for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan escalates in Punjab. Army operation against militants at Golden Temple, Amritsar, on 3rd June. Among those killed is Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a *granthi* (religious leader) who spearheaded the movement for Khalistan. On 31st October Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in the garden of her house. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's elder son, assumes the post of prime minister. December, elections are held and Rajiv Gandhi sweeps the polls winning by a three-fourth majority. Out of 495 seats in the Lok Sabha, the Congress claims 401.

On 3rd Dec the Union Carbide tragedy occurs in Bhopal. Escaping gas from tanks in the plant takes a heavy toll of lives.

1986: 30th June. Peaceful accord after a 20-year insurgency in Mizoram.

1987: India and Sri Lanka sign a peace accord to end the communal conflict between the government and the Tamil separatist fighters in Sri Lanka.

1989 Nov: Elections are held and the Congress Party fails to gain majority. A coalition government is formed with V P Singh as prime minister.

1991 May: Rajiv Gandhi assassinated.

1991 June: P V Narasimha Rao sworn in as prime minister.

BATTLES

BATTLE OF KURUKSHETRA 1424 BC

The *Mahabharata* war, an event which is unanimously accepted as an actual occurrence, and subsequently given epic proportions, has been variously dated between 1424 BC and 900 BC. It is believed to have been a local feud originally, involving finally most of the tribes of the northern plains and hills.

As legend has it, the original feud was between the family of the Kuru king and the Pandu family, cousins of the Kurus, over the tracts of land surrounding Hastinapur and Indraprastha, in what is Haryana today. The Kurus were in fact, defeated in the battle of Kurukshetra. But it is believed that the Pandu dynasty soon died out and the cousins from the Kuru family once again ruled supreme over the region (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata).

BATTLE OF HYDASPES 327 BC

Alexander, prince of Macedonia, had set out to conquer the world but death came on the heels of his Indian/Punjab campaign. The real significance of Alexander's invasion of the Indus Valley was in the opening up of the north-west to lands beyond the valley. The most famous of Alexander's confrontations is the battle of Hydaspes in which he defeated Porus, the king of the Jhelum region. Alexander left behind him anarchy in the north-west which Chandragupta Maurya exploited to his own advantage.

MAGADHA 321 BC

This battle won Chandragupta Maurya his kingdom. Having earlier defeated the Greek satraps of the north-west, he founded the Mauryan dynasty only after routing the last of the Nanda kings in this battle.

KALINGA 261 BC

The battle is famous as the one that turned Emperor Ashoka to Buddhism and to the path of non-violence. It is said that over one lakh people were killed and nearly twice the number taken captive in the course of the war which took place in the ninth year of Ashoka's reign. Kalinga, near modern-day Bhubaneswar, was the capital of a kingdom of the same name, wealthy and prosperous, rich in the arts and music. Its most famous king was Kharavela who came after Ashoka (See Archaeology/Architecture – Bhubaneswar).

ANURADHAPURA 155 BC

The Pandya dynasty captured the capital city of northern Sri Lanka. The Pandyas

ruled the area south of the river Vallaru (the area that later came to be known as the Pudukkottai state). King Nedunchezian of this dynasty was one of the more renowned warriors. Later, after the Cholas had almost entirely replaced the Pandyas as the power centre of the region, the Chola king, Rajaraja I (985-1014 AD) conducted a naval attack on the Sri Lankan capital. Anuradhapura was destroyed and the Cholas moved the capital to Pollonnaruva.

MAHMUD OF GHAZNI 1001-26

The first 'real' invasion by Mahmud of Ghazni who defeated the Shahiya king, Jaipal, near Peshawar in 1001 AD. Mahmud of Ghazni conducted 14 major expeditions into India between 1001 and 1026 in which period he defeated the Rajput king of Bikaner, the legendary Raja Bhoj of the Parmar dynasty of Malwa, Thaneshwar, Matsya, Mathura and Kanauj. He met failure in Kashmir (1015), but succeeded in annexing Lahore (1021), which then became the launching pad for future Persian invasions into the Indian subcontinent. His final foray into India centred on Somnath, one of the richest cities of the region then, particularly its temple (See Holy Places: Temples).

THANJAVUR-MALDIVES 1010

Chola king Rajaraja I annexed the Maldiv Islands.

KOPPAM 1059

A battle for supremacy in the peninsula took place near what is Mysore today between Chalukya king Somesvara I and Chola king Rajadhiraja, in which the latter was killed. The Chalukya king also defeated Chedi king Raja Karna soon after and became the most powerful ruler south of the Vindhya.

BURDWAN 1097

The Senas began their rule in Bengal, putting an end to Pala rule, with the defeat of Madanapala by Vijaya Sena in this year.

TARAIN 1191-92

1191 saw the first invasion of the Indian subcontinent by Muhammad Ghori. He was defeated by the legendary Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer in 1191 at Tarain, but he routed the Ajmeri forces (again at Tarain near Ajmer) the following year. The greatest significance of his invasion lay in that he left behind his 'slave' Qutub-ud-din Aibak to hold the lands conquered. Thus began the age of the Persian Muslim rule in northern India.

KAMRUP 1205

Bakhtiyar Khilji attempted to annex Kamrup (modern-day Assam) and suffered defeat at the hands of the 'mlecchas' (bar-

barians) who held the region. Khilji destroyed Nalanda university and was later assassinated by one of his own men; 50 years later Kamrup was overrun and held successfully (till modern times) by the Ahoms who gave the region its name.

PATAN 1297

Ala-ud-din Khilji defeated Raja Karna II of the Chalukyas of Gujarat. This battle brought independent rule in Gujarat to a virtual end. While it remained subjugated totally till the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb held powers, later too it was not totally independent. It became a dependent state of Delhi thereafter.

KAUTHAL 1367

One of the bloodiest battles in peninsular India, it ended in the defeat of the Vijayanagara rulers, Harihara and Bukka at the hands of the Bahmani Sultans. But in the long run it did Vijayanagara no lasting harm. Vijayanagara remained, for the next century, the kingdom south of the Vindhya.

DELHI 1398

Timur (Tamerlane) captured Delhi, and Hardwar thereafter. These are considered to have been the worst of the Mongol raids and they also signalled the end of the early Muslim era in India. Timur's nominee, the first of the Sayyids, was named sultan of Delhi. The central Asian Turks settled down in India and wielded influence in almost every important state in India.

TALLIKOTA 1465

The battle signalled the end of the once glorious Vijayanagara empire. Virupaksha II of Vijayanagara was defeated by the combined forces of the sultanates of Ahmednagar, Bidar, Bijapur and Golconda.

GAUR 1493

Ala-ud-din Husain Shah defeated Muzaffar Shah Habsi at Gaur.

CHAUL 1508

The rulers of Calicut (the Zamorin) and Gujarat (Sultan Mahmud Begara) combined forces to defeat the Portuguese navy at Calicut. It is said the sultan of Egypt helped the Indian forces. But the Portuguese retaliated the following year and destroyed the Muslim navy in a battle off Diu in Gujarat. Soon after this Sultan Begara allowed the Portuguese to set up a factory at Diu. In 1534 the Portuguese captured Bassein in present-day Maharashtra and then Diu.

PANIPAT 1526, 1556, 1761

1526 saw the first of three major decisive battles at Panipat, at which Babar, the

founder of the Mughal dynasty, defeated Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. The second battle of Panipat (1556) was between the forces of Akbar, the most renowned of the Mughal rulers, and those of Sikandar Suri, firmly setting the Mughals on the throne of Delhi. The third decisive battle at Panipat (1761) was the last battle for Delhi (through use of arms) between the Marathas led by Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao and the Afghan Ahmad Shah Abdali, at which the former were totally routed.

MALWA 1531

End of the Khilji dynasty with Mahmud Khilji II's defeat and execution at the hands of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

CHAUSA 1539

Sher Shah of Bengal defeated Humayun at Chausa, near modern-day Buxar, in June of 1539 and again at Hardoi (in modern-day U.P.) near Kanauj the following year. This led Sher Shah to hold Delhi for a brief period of five years, from Shergarh, the sixth capital at Delhi. Humayun fled to the north-west provinces. Humayun's capture of Lahore in 1555 provided the base, finally, for a successful recapture of Delhi. Sher Shah died in an accident in 1545 and Delhi was then held by the Suris. Humayun defeated Sikander Suri in 1555, five months after capturing Lahore.

KANAUJ 1540

Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah of Bengal for the second time. The battle actually took place near Hardoi (close to Kanauj) in modern-day Uttar Pradesh. This brought Delhi under the suzerainty of Sher Shah who then established the sixth capital of Delhi region – at Shergarh, the fort we know as the Purana Qila or Old Fort. Sher Shah died in an accident in 1545. Humayun was able to recapture Delhi only in 1555.

SRINAGAR 1540

The capital of Kashmir was seized in battle against chieftains of regional principalities by Hyder Mirza Doghlat, a general of Humayun. He proceeded to establish himself as an independent king. Kashmir was in disarray after the death in 1472 of the scholarly Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin who patronised the translation of the *Mababharata* and *Rajatarangini* into Persian and was of Ladakhi origin.

At the time of Hyder Mirza's invasion, Shia-Sunni (See Religion: Islam) quarrels were frequent in Kashmir – indeed decisive in the politics of the region. However, these local factions got together to oppose the Mughal who was assassinated in 1551. After a further period during which the king failed to assert himself,

Ghazi Khan Chak seized the throne in Srinagar in 1561 and founded the famous Chak dynasty.

HALDIGHATI 1576

Immortalised in several songs and legends, the battle of Haldighati or Gorgunda at which Rana Pratap of Mewar lost to Akbar. In July of the same year, Akbar defeated Daud Khan Karnani at the battle of Rajmahal and thereby seized control of Bengal. This brought to an end 236 years of Afghan rule and virtually ended independent rule in Bengal which henceforth remained dependent on the Mughals till seized by the British. The battle of Nerkujal (1612) killed the last of the Afghan kings, Usman Khan Lohori.

TORNA 1646

The start of Shivaji's adventurous career. He captured Torna fort from the Sultan of Bijapur this year. In 1664 he captured Surat and came into conflict with the British for the first time. In 1665 he entered into a treaty with Mughals at Purandhar. In 1672, at the battle of Salhire the Marathas completely routed the Mughal army led by Urahbat Khan. In 1674 Shivaji was crowned 'Chattrapati' at Rajgarh.

COCHIN 1663

Captured by the Dutch.

AMRITSAR 1708

After the assassination of the 10th Sikh Guru at Nanded (See Religion: Sikhism) by an Afghan hireling of the Nawab of Sirhind, Banda Bahadur Lachman Das became the temporal leader of the Sikhs and captured Amritsar from the Mughals. A running war continued however, and Banda Bahadur was finally captured in 1716 at Gurdaspur and executed with hundreds of his followers.

DELHI 1739

Nadir Shah of Persia ransacked Delhi and massacred almost all inhabitants – a massacre that continued for 58 days and left 20,000 dead in the region. He took with him the Peacock throne and the Kohinoor diamond and left behind a crippled Mughal empire. A treaty in May the same year between Nadir Shah and the Mughal emperor gave Afghanistan a separate and independent entity.

ARCOT 1751

The year in which Robert Clive captured Arcot from Chanda Saheb. But the battle for Arcot continued till the death of Chanda Saheb, the nawab who was executed by Clive after his defeat and capture at the battle at Tiruchirapalli in 1752.

CALCUTTA 1756

Siraj-ud-Daula, nawab of Bengal captured Calcutta on 17th June and locked 146 British prisoners in a small room, from which only 23 remained alive the next morning – this is the story of the infamous 'Black hole of Calcutta.' Clive attacked Calcutta in October of the same year and had recaptured it in January the following year. Soon after, the British captured Bandel from the Portuguese.

THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY 1757

Hostilities resumed with Siraj-ud-Daula, who had never accepted British presence as a permanency. On 23rd June Clive defeated the nawab of Bengal with the help, through intrigue, of one of the nawab's ministers – Mir Jafar, who was thereafter named nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Siraj-ud-Daula, who escaped the field of battle at Plassey, was captured and assassinated on the orders of Mir Jafar's son Mirana in July the same year. Mir Jafar died in 1765. In the meantime – and this was the real significance of the battle of Plassey – Clive was declared the governor of Bengal by Mir Jafar and the 24 Parganas was ceded to the British.

FRENCH-BRITISH WARS 1757-60

The British under Clive captured Chandernagore from the French in March. In 1750 the French ceded Madras to the British. The battle of Wandiwash left the British the supreme European power.

POST-INDEPENDANCE

Since 1947 the Indian armed forces have fought defensive wars against Pakistani and Chinese aggression (1948, 1965, 1971 and 1962 respectively). From 1987 to 1989, an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was invited to Sri Lanka as a deterrent to Tamil separatists.

DYNASTIES

MAHAJANAPADA 6TH CENTURY BC

Buddhist literature lists 16 important states in northern India in the 6th century BC, roughly contemporary to Gautama Buddha (See Religion: Buddhism). Some of these had hereditary monarchs but others were ruled either by representatives of the people or by the nobility as a whole. Among the hereditary monarchies Magadha (ruled by the Haryanka dynasty), Kosala or Avadh (Aikshvaku), Vatsa (Paurava) and Avanti or Malwa (Pradyota) were the most important. The other two were the kingdoms of Kasi or Matsya (modern Jaipur), Kuru Panchala (western Uttar Pradesh) and Kausambi.

Of the non-monarchical states the most important was the Vriji Confederacy of eight clans. The most powerful among these were the Lichchavis of Vaisali (modern Muzaffarnagar in Bihar), the Sakyas of Kapilavastu (in Nepal), the Mallas of Pava and the Mallas of Kusinagara (Gorakhpur). These states had no hereditary ruler and administration was in the charge of an assembly with an elected chief or Mahasamanta and an executive council.

HARYANKA 6TH CENTURY-413 BC

Rulers of the important kingdom of Magadha (now southern Bihar). This was one of the 16 states in the Gangetic valley mentioned in Buddhist literature as the 16 Mahajanapadas. Roughly placed in the 6th century BC, the two notable scions of this dynasty were Bimbisara and his son Ajatashatru. Bimbisara (who is believed to have died in 494 BC) is said to be the first Indian king to seek imperial power and conquest. He conquered Anga (now Bhagalpur) and Ajatashatru went on to conquer Kosala, the powerful Lichchavi states and Matsya. Bimbisara is also said to be the first Indian king to stress on efficient administration. He organised separate ministries and departments of administration, emphasised and organised a network of roads, measurement of land, evaluation of crops, collected taxes, and is said to be the founder of Rajagriha – the city that was later to be called Pataliputra. Exploration of this site began in 1905.

Ajatashatru is variously said to have died between BC 461 and BC 459. He established Magadha as the single most important power in northern India, having conquered most of the important states including the Vriji Confederacy. Ajatashatru is said to have become a follower of the Buddha later in life.

Ajatashatru was succeeded by five kings, the last of whom was deposed by

the people. A courtier of the Magadha kingdom, Sisunaga was placed on the throne in 413 BC.

NANDA 413-321 BC

The Nandas usurped the Magadha throne from the last of the Sisunagas who had replaced the Haryanka rulers following a popular uprising. The Sisunagas ruled for about half a century.

The founder of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha was Mahapadma Nanda, one of the early Sudra (underprivileged community) kings. Apart from an efficient administration, the Nandas also built canals and irrigation projects. The last of the Nandas was killed in battle with Chandragupta Maurya.

TAMIL CONFEDERACY 414 BC

Comprised the kingdoms of the Chola, Pandya and the Chera dynasties/houses. Megasthenes, the Greek chronicler, says the Pandya lineage was established by the daughters of Heracles, one of Alexander's governors. While the three kingdoms were at constant war with each other, they united in a confederacy against all outsiders. Though the confederacy broke up (around 174 BC) when Kharavela of Kalinga defeated them in battle, each of the kingdoms independently grew to become one of the most prosperous and culturally rich of ancient India.

The confederacy is known to have sent a joint mission to Emperor Augustus in Rome.

PANDYAS 414 BC

Part of the Tamil Confederacy that controlled the peninsular south, the Pandyas are said to have replaced the Cholas as patrons of the Tamil (literary) Sangam (See Literature : Tamil). The capital of the Pandyas was at Madurai. By the 6th century AD they were a formidable power in the south and finally in the 12th-13th centuries, contributed significantly to the decline of Chola supremacy. But the Pandyas themselves were unable to withstand the attacks of the Turk, Muhammad Khilji, and though they survived as an entity, they became feudatories of the new sultans in Delhi by the end of the 14th century.

CHOLAS 414 BC-1173

The founding of the dynasty is not exactly chronicled, though there is mention – in ballads and epics – of Chola kings and armies participating in the battle of Kurukshetra. However, the first historical mention of the Chola king is dated to 414 BC when they are mentioned as being part of a Tamil confederacy, in transcriptions nearly 200 years later in Kalinga and in Sri Lanka.

Among early Chola kings mentioned are Karikala and Nalangilli. The first important king was Parantaka I of the 1st century AD.

The Cholas went on to become the most powerful state of peninsular India. Their ascendancy declined only in the 13th century AD as the Hoysalas, Kakatiyas and Pandyas began to attack the Chola kingdom repeatedly.

The Cholas were prosperous agriculturists, great traders and are known to have developed maritime expertise and a relatively formidable navy early in the 1st century AD. Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram (See Archaeology/Architecture), Shaliyur, Korkai, Kaveripattinam on the east coast and Quilon on the Malabar coast were important ports. Merchant and craftsmen's guilds were strong. The state was famed for its centres of learning, particularly those at Ennayiram, Tribhuvani, Tiruvaduturai and Tiruvayyur. Many Buddhist and Jain centres of learning also flourished. The Brihadiiswara temple at Thanjavur (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Temples) built in the 10th century and the weavers of Kanchipuram (See Handicrafts: Woven Textiles) are examples that placed the Cholas among the greatest builders and craftsmen of India at the time.

The Chola empire extended from coast to coast, excluding southern Kerala and Kalinga, including much of what is today Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Sri Lanka and all of modern Tamil Nadu.

The first Chola king who can be precisely chronicled is Vijayalaya (846-871 AD) and the last great emperor of the dynasty was Rajaraja II (1146-1173 AD).

CHERA/PERUMAL 414 BC 14 CENTURY

The Perumal dynasty established the Chera kingdom. Also known as the Keralas or Keralaputras, it was part of the Tamil Confederacy which first finds mention in 414 BC. A well-established maritime and mercantile community and state, the Chera kingdom is known to have had close trade links with all the major contemporary states such as the Pallavas, Cholas, Varmans in India, the Arabs and Romans, among others. The Perumals were a rare dynasty in the subcontinent at the time – with little or no imperial ambitions. The only Chera king to have had some political ambitions was Ravivarman Kulasekhara at the end of the 13th century and Nedunjeral Adan.

After the 14th century the Perumals/Cheras find no significant mention in Indian history. The kingdom was subjugated by the Pallavas.

MAURYAS 321-184 BC

The founder of the dynasty was Chandragupta Maurya who, after whittling away at the eastern borders of the Magadha empire of the Nandas, finally dethroned the last of the Nanda kings. The Maurya empire under the founder of the dynasty encompassed, finally, almost the entire Gangetic plain up to Bengal in the east, including the entire region north of the Narmada and the north-west. But it was the grandson of Chandragupta, Ashoka, who extended the borders to encompass a larger area of the subcontinent than ever before, including Kalinga and those parts of the peninsula not in the Tamil confederacy. However, the greatest achievements of the Mauryan dynasty were two: the principles and norms of political economy laid down by Chandragupta's mentor and minister Chanakya, and the active patronage extended by Ashoka to Buddhism after he himself converted to the non-theistic ethic after his Kalinga campaign in 261 BC.

PALLAVAS 275-12TH CENTURY

The dynasty can be traced back to 275 AD to rulers of a small tract of land near Kanchipuram. But as rulers of a kingdom, the dynasty is dated to Mahendra Varman in 600 AD. The origins of the Pallavas has inspired much interest as one view has it that they were originally Parthians who moved from western India to the east coast of the peninsula in the 2nd century during the wars between the Sakas and Satavahanas, others that they originated from the north-east tribes. Whatever may be the case, it seems likely they were not native to the region.

Mahendra Varman (600-630) was a contemporary of Harshavardhana of Thaneswar and is known as much for his artistic abilities as for his warriorship and empire-building. He authored a play *Matavilasaprabhasana* (The delight of the drunkards) and was responsible for the famous rock-temples of Mahabalipuram (See Archaeology/Architecture).

The Pallavas had a running battle with the Chalukyas for territory. The Pallavas were finally weakened by a Chalukya-Ganga-Pandya combine in the 9th century, but continued as a lesser power for another century. The last of the Pallava kings, Kampavarman, was assassinated sometime soon after 885 and the line came to an end shortly after.

SATAVAHANA 220 BC-236

Founded by Simuka, more or less encompassing the region that is modern Andhra Pradesh. The founder may have been an elected king of the Andhras, a

people who find mention as an autonomous community in the 8th century BC *Aitreya Brahmana* and who were subjugated by Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty. Shortly after Ashoka's death the Andhras declared their independence and placed Simuka on the throne.

The Satavahanas established their rule over the region from the mouth of the Krishna in modern Maharashtra and over much of the northern parts of the Deccan plateau. The *Puranas* say that a Satavahana king Satakarni killed the last of the Kanyas of Magadha. He was called 'the Lord of the West' and is reputed to have conquered the lands bordering modern Gujarat and withstood Kharavela of Kalinga. He gained control of Malwa and Sanchi north of the Narmada. But after Satakarni much of the northern and western possessions were lost and the Satavahanas remained ensconced basically south of the Narmada. Their western lands were lost to the Sakas and the northern to the Guptas.

The Satavahana reign was one of prosperity for the Andhras. The mercantile and crafts guilds grew, roads were built and a uniform administration, including land laws and irrigation and taxation were established (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

The dynasty disintegrated in the 3rd century AD and the Vakatakas took over what remained of the kingdom (after the Sakas and Guptas had decimated it further) by the end of that century.

SUNGAS 184-72 BC

Pushyamitra Sunga, in 184 BC, dethroned Brihadratha, the 10th and last Mauryan ruler of Magadha. The Sunga dynasty ruled Magadha till 72 BC. Pushyamitra was the commander-in-chief of the Mauryan army. Patanjali II, the famous grammarian, is believed to have lived in Pushyamitra's court. The last Sunga king, Devabhuti, was killed by his minister Vasudeva who founded the short-lived Kanya dynasty of Magadha (72 BC-27 BC) (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). The last Kanya king, Susarman, was himself killed in battle by king Satakarni of the Satavahana dynasty who then became the ruler of Magadha.

SAKAS 80 BC-4TH CENTURY

The first Saka king was Malles. The dynasty was Greek in origin. Based in the Indus Valley, a branch of the family ruled western India and went on to include a part of the Andhra kingdom in their domain. The Sakas were distinct from other Greek dynasties in that they absorbed themselves

in the local culture, opted for the local Brahmi script and used Prakrit in their official records. They patronised Buddhism and Brahminism equally.

The greatest of the Saka kings was Rudradaman who, by the Girnar (See Archaeology/Architecture) inscriptions, seems to have been a model administrator. The earliest known chaste Sanskrit inscription is his. The Saka rule was finally ended by the Guptas in the 4th century AD.

GUPTAS 4TH-6TH CENTURY

The origins of the Guptas is obscure. It is believed they were wealthy landowners who gained political ascendancy in Magadha. The dynasty historically came into its own with Chandragupta I who married a princess of the powerful Lichchavi state. He extended his kingdom to include Magadha and parts of the eastern regions of what is today known as Uttar Pradesh. His son Samudragupta (350 AD-380 AD) established the dynasty as a formidable power in northern India and also threatened the Deccan. He conquered the entire Gangetic Valley, and made into feudatories most of the kings or chiefs of central India, Nepal, Rajasthan, and some from Bengal in the east and the Punjab in the west.

The period ruled by Samudragupta and his own son Chandragupta II is known as the golden age of the Guptas (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). Chandragupta II defeated the Sakas in the early part of the 5th century and allied himself with the peninsular states which then paid him homage. It was during this time that trade became a major activity for a north Indian state as the western ports fell into Gupta hands.

The Gupta dynasty came to an end by the end of the 6th century as it disintegrated, initially under attack by the Huns from the north-west, and then from almost all its neighbouring states.

For nearly a century Magadha was in a state of anarchy – until the rise of the Varadhana dynasty.

CHALUKYAS 642-12TH CENTURY

The Chalukyas built their kingdom on the ruins of the Vakataka state which had itself come up on the Satavahana kingdom. The Chalukyas began with a principality in Vatapi or Badami and adjacent Aihole (See Archaeology/Architecture) in northern Mysore (now Karnataka) from where they moved northwards to Nasik and the upper Godavari, defeating the Vakatakas in battle. The main branch of the family continued to rule the lands north of the Narmada. This branch is known as the Lata Chalukyas. The Lata Chalukyas were

driven back for some years in the 8th century by the Rashtrakutas during which time one branch of the family moved south to conquer Kalyani, a region bordering modern Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This branch, that came to be known as the Kalyani Chalukyas ruled from 973 to 1200.

RASHTRAKUTAS 6TH CENTURY-1000

The origins of the family lies in antiquity and is undated, believed to be rulers of a small principality in central India. The dynasty came into prominence only with Dantidurga (752-756) who extended the boundaries of his state to include the areas around what is today Aurangabad district in Maharashtra. His son Krishna I was responsible for the rock-cut Kailasha temple of Ellora (See Archaeology/Architecture; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture – Ellora). The Rashtrakutas went on to rule most of present-day Maharashtra and even threatened the Chola kingdom south of the Narmada and Kanauj and Allahabad to the east. However, they lost Malwa in the 10th century and were finally demolished by breakaway feudatories, most of them of Rajput origin.

PALAS 7TH-11TH CENTURY

Little is known of the early Palas till the reign of the third Pala king, Gopala (750-770), who may not have been a direct descendant. It is believed that Gopala was not a hereditary king though the lineage after him was hereditary. Despite heavy attacks by the Rashtrakutas, Gopala's son Dharmapala (770-810) made the Pala empire of Gaur (modern Bengal) a power to reckon with in politics in the subcontinent.

The Palas maintained political and trade relations with Tibet and the countries and kingdoms of south-east Asia. They were finally decimated by the Senas.

SENAS 9TH-13TH CENTURY

The founder of this dynasty of kings who ruled what is today known as Bengal, Samanta Sena, cannot be precisely dated but may be placed at either the end of the 9th century or early 10th century. The third ruler of the dynasty was Vijaya Sena (1097-1159). It is also known that a Sena king founded Nabadwip town, in what is presently Nadia district, in 1063 and shifted the old capital of Bengal from Gaur in the north to Nabadwip. The dynasty had ten rulers. Vijaya Sena put an end to Pala rule and brought all of Bengal under a single sovereign. Bengal had a period of prosperity and stability under the Senas. Muhammad Khilji's raids in the 13th century decimated the dynasty and brought about its virtual collapse. Hereafter, Bengal came

under Muslim rule.

KAKATIYA 10TH CENTURY-1326

The Kakatiyas' origins are unknown, though they are believed to have been powerful landowners in Warangal. They broke away from the Chalukyas and established a kingdom that was not large, but powerful in its prosperity and efficient administration. The Kakatiyas were great patrons of learning. The dynasty ended with the incursion of Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq's armies into Warangal.

HOYSALA 1027-1342

The Hoysalas of Dorasamudra (modern Karnataka) were renowned patrons of art and sculpture, mainly in temple buildings (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture). Halebid, Belur and Somnathpur (See Archaeology/Architecture) were built during their reign. Srirangapatnam was also built in this period.

The dynasty was responsible to a significant degree in weakening the power of the Cholas.

The Hoysalas began as hill chieftains from the Western Ghats and expanded their territory. For a short while in the 11th century they were feudatories of the Chalukyas. The Hoysalas finally succumbed under the Turkish invasion.

THE SLAVE DYNASTY 1206-1240

So called because its founder, Qutub-ud-din Aibak, was a 'slave' and a general of Muhammad Ghori. As a general, Qutub-ud-din captured Delhi, Meerut, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Ajmer, Gujarat, Bundelkhand and a part of Bengal. In 1206 he was crowned at Lahore as sultan of the Muhammadan possessions in the subcontinent. Qutub-ud-din died in Lahore in 1210 and was succeeded by Iltutmish (1211-36) his son-in-law, who was in turn succeeded by his daughter Raziya Sultan (1236-40), the first woman to rule an empire in the subcontinent. Raziya was put to death after a revolt by her nobles. Balban, once a slave, ruled for 26 years.

The Qutub Minar of Delhi (See Archaeology/Architecture), started in 1193 by Qutub-ud-din who built the first five storeys, was completed by Iltutmish.

KHILJI 1290-1320

The Khilji dynasty replaced both the dynastic rules that arose out of the invasion of the subcontinent by Muhammad of Ghori – the so-called Slave dynasty of Delhi and the Ghori dynasty of Malwa. The Khiljis seized the throne of Delhi in the anarchy that followed the disintegration of the Slave dynasty. The most noted of the Khiljis was Ala-ud-din who led excursions into almost



The royal room at Jodhpur House

all neighbouring states of Delhi. He was also a patron of learning, a fact that is not as well known as his military prowess.

The dynasty ended when a general, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq usurped the throne in 1320 after the Khilji line died out and a short period of a few months of anarchy set in.

TUGHLAQ 1320-1413

The Tughlaq dynasty began with Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq Shah I, a general under the Khiljis. He took upon himself the task of punishing the assassin of the last of Khiljis whereupon the nobles hailed him as their new emperor. The dynasty lasted for nearly a century and at its peak encompassed the entire Gangetic valley, northern Deccan, Gujarat, the north-west provinces and extracted feudal dues from Bengal. Ghiyas-ud-din's son Muhammad Tughlaq Shah II was notorious for his imperial ambitions – he killed his father, put an end to Kakatiya rule in Andhra, established the fourth capital in the Delhi region at Jahanpanah (next to Tughlaqabad) and claimed suzerainty over Bengal. It was during his reign that the capital of a northern empire was shifted to the south for the first time – to Devagiri (modern Daulatabad). The dynasty ended in 1413 with Khizr Khan Sayyid seizing the throne. A short spell of anarchy then followed the disintegration of the Tughlaqs.

BAHMANI 1347-1526

Zafar Khan, an Afghan or Turk revolted against Delhi and established the independent kingdom of the Bahmanis, with Gulbarga as its capital (then called Hasan-

abad). The rulers were all powerful soldiers and the kingdom comprised most of what is northern Karnataka, part of southern Maharashtra and a part of present Andhra Pradesh. The Bahmani kingdom finally split up into five independent states – Bidar, Bijapur, Berar, Golconda, Ahmednagar, and the last of the Bahmani empire was annexed by Aurangzeb, the Mughal.

SAYYID 1414-1451

The Sayyids had a short and uneventful rule of about half a century, marked only by declarations of independence from Delhi by Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, the Deccan states and others which had begun to revolt from the time following the death of Muhammad Tughlaq Shah II in 1351.

LODI 1451-1526

The Lodis came from Afghanistan. They had been courtiers under the Tughlaqs. Sikander Lodi (1489-1517) built the Agra-Mathura road. He also laid the foundations of Agra and shifted the capital from Delhi to Agra in 1503.

IMAD SHAHI 1485-1574

The dynasty was established by Fath Ullah Huad-ul-Rulh. Encompassing modern Bihar, it was a breakaway from the Bahmani kingdom. In 1574 it was absorbed into the Ahmednagar kingdom.

NIZAM SHAHI 1490-1600

Ahmad Ibn Nizam Shah, governor of Junnar under the Bahmanis, broke away to found the powerful Ahmednagar kingdom. The dynasty absorbed some of the

other breakaway states of the Bahmanis but was itself annexed by Aurangzeb in 1600.

ADIL SHAHI 1490-1686

The governor of Bijapur, Yusuf Adil Shah, broke away from the Bahmani kingdom and established the independent state of Bijapur. The kingdom was annexed by Aurangzeb in 1686.

BARID SHAHI 1492-1619

One of the breakaways of the Bahmani kingdom, it was founded by Qasim-I-Barid Shah, a minister of the Bahmanis. The dynasty ruled Bidar till annexed by the Mughals in 1619.

MUGHAL 1526-1857

Founded by Babar, who defeated the last of the Lodis at the first battle of Panipat in 1526. Babar's son Humayun (1530-56) was driven out of Delhi for over 15 years after his defeat at the hands of Sher Shah of Bengal at the Battle of Kanauj in 1540. He regained Delhi in 1555.

Humayun's son Akbar (1556-1605) is known as the greatest of the Mughals not only because of his extensive conquests (he expanded the Mughal empire to include the entire region north of the Vindhya from the Arabian coastline to the Bay of Bengal, including the north-west provinces bordering present-day Afghanistan) but also for his administration, economic and civic regimes, and especially his religious open-mindedness.

His son Jehangir designed the Mughal gardens in Kashmir for his queen Nur Jehan, the creator of attar/itr of roses (See Adornment: Cosmetics).

Jehangir's son Shah Jahan (1628-59) built the beautiful Taj Mahal (See Archaeology/Architecture). But it was under Aurangzeb (1659-1707) that the limits of empire expanded farthest, especially in the Deccan.

There were 12 Mughal rulers of Delhi after Aurangzeb but the disintegration had begun towards the end of Aurangzeb's rule with revolts from Bengal, the Deccan states, Gujarat, the Marathas, the Jats in central India, among others.

The dynasty came to an end in 1857 after Bahadur Shah Zafar was deposed by the British after they quelled the Revolt of 1857, of which Bahadur Shah was one of the nominal leaders.

SHIVAJI

Born in 1630 at Sivaner in Junnar, Shivaji – or Chatrapati Shivaji as he came to be titled – began his career as an empire-builder with the capture of Torna fort from the rulers of Bijapur in 1646. In 1656 he took on

the Mughal might for the first time, by attacking both Junnar and Ahmednagar. In 1658 Shivaji constructed Pratapggarh, renowned as the 'fort that never fell' in the same year as Aurangzeb's accession to the throne at Delhi. In 1664 Shivaji attacked Surat and came into direct conflict with the British for the first time. It was also the first time that the British faced Indian troops in war. Shivaji also took the title Raja the same year.

In 1665 Shivaji surrendered to Mughal forces at Purandhar and under the treaty that followed gave up 23 important forts to Aurangzeb, retaining only 12 minor ones. But in 1667 Aurangzeb granted the title of Raja to Shivaji.

Shivaji resumed hostilities with the Mughals in 1670 with the capture of Simhagarh. The same year he plundered Surat again facing the British, French, and Dutch forces. In 1674 he was crowned at Raigarh and took the title of Chatrapati. He signed a treaty with the British the same year. Shivaji joined forces with some of the Deccan Sultanates to fight the Mughals. He died in 1680 at Raigarh leaving to his son Sambhaji a throne that controlled almost all of present Maharashtra, extending over a part of modern-day Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Sambhaji lost his life in 1689 after being taken prisoner by Aurangzeb's forces.

After the death of Sambhaji in 1689, the next in line, Shahu, Shivaji's grandson, was kept prisoner in Aurangzeb's court and the Marathas were ruled by the regent, Raja Ram. In 1698 he survived a Mughal attack and established a new capital at Satara. After his death in 1700 his widow, Tara Bai, became regent. She led several offensives against the Mughals.

In 1708 began the internecine war among the Marathas, when Shahu returned to Satara after being released by the Mughals following Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Tara Bai declared her son Shivaji II as the rightful heir and refused to accept Shahu's claim to the throne. After the death of her son Shivaji II, she put forward the claim of her other son Sambhaji to the throne.

In 1713 Shahu appointed Balaji Vishwanath as his Peshwa or minister. This move helped Shahu regain his kingdom. Balaji's son Baji Rao I who became the next Peshwa in 1720 after his father's death was a great soldier and statesman and finally defeated Sambhaji in 1730.

Baji Rao I died in 1740 by which time the supremacy of the Peshwa as the real ruler was established. His son Balaji Baji Rao succeeded him.

Around this time the powerful Maratha families – the Bhonsles – came up. But Peshwa rule continued till 1818 when the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was defeated by the British in battle at Rampura. The Peshwas led successful campaigns as far as Lahore in the north and Bengal in the east. But these were mainly in the nature of raids, with no intentions of establishing permanent rule.

Shahu himself (grandson of Chatrapati Shivaji) died in 1749. A posthumous son of Shivaji II, Raja Ram, was crowned king, but this was only a titular power. He signed the Sangola agreement in 1750, investing the Peshwa with all powers of a ruler.

Tara Bai died in 1761.

BRITISH PERIOD

1600: *Hector*, the first ship of the East India Company, touched Surat in Gujarat on 24th August, with Captain Lancaster in charge. It was in September 1599 that 24 merchants met in London to start a new company for business with India with a total share capital of 30,133 pound sterling. It was called the Company for East India or East India Company, though it was registered as such only in 1833.

The East India Company obtained land for English settlements for the first time in 1611 at Masulipatam (in modern-day Andhra Pradesh) and Petapuli. In 1640 the Company was given permission to establish a business centre at Madras which was then called Sri Rangarajapatnam. The first business settlement at Hooghly came up in 1650, and near modern Calcutta in 1680. The Company began to trade in tea in 1668. In 1674 the British East India Company signed a friendship treaty with Shivaji and was allowed to establish factories at Hubli and Rajapur.

1612: The East India Company formed an independent navy and based it at Swally near Surat. As it grew, the navy changed its name several times – from Bombay Marine (1686) to His Majesty's Indian Marine, the Royal Indian Marine and the Royal Indian Navy. In 1948 it became the Indian Navy.

1626: The East India Company established their first fortified settlement in India at Aramgaon. In 1640 a fort was set up at Madras called Fort St. George. Fort St William near Calcutta was set up in 1696.

1655: Job Charnock, later renowned as the founder of Calcutta, arrived to take up employment with the British East India Company. The foundations of modern Calcutta were laid in 1690 at Sutanati. Later, the British purchased Govindpur and Kalikata from the landed family of the Sabarna

Chaudhuris in 1698 for just Rs 12,000. These three formed the nucleus of the city. In 1661 Britain's King Charles II was given Bombay on his marriage to Catherine de Braganza of Portugal as part of her dowry. He leased it out to the Company.

1668: The First British European Regiment was formed.

1674: A group of British armed forces mutinied and were suppressed.

1676: The East India Company was given permission by the British King to mint coins. These were called rupee and pice after the coinage of Sher Shah who ruled Bengal from 1539-45. In 1686 King James II established a mint at Madras.

1682: On 14th July 1682 Bengal was made into a Presidency administered by the East India Company. The original order was issued on 14th November, 1681. In 1683 the British king invested full power in the Company to make war or peace treaties with any nations in Asia and recruit such military forces as necessary. The same year, the Company enrolled two companies of Rajput soldiers – the foundations of the British army in India.

1744: Robert Clive entered the services of East India Company. In 1757 he became governor of Bengal for the first time. He left India in 1760 and was succeeded by Hollwell and Vansittart as governors of Bengal, but took up the post again in 1765. In 1767 he returned to Britain. In 1774 he committed suicide.

1750: Warren Hastings landed in India as a civil servant of the East India Company.

1767: The combined forces of Hyder Ali of Mysore and the Nizam of Hyderabad met and were defeated by the British at Changanacherry. However, a running war continued between Mysore and the British though the Nizam independently entered into a treaty, accepting British supremacy, in 1768.

1769: East India Company imposed various restrictions on the weavers of Bengal to destroy the industry and assure that the competition to the nascent British textile industry was curtailed.

1769: Hyder Ali forced the British to sign a treaty (in Madras) whereby all lands were restored to the status on the eve of the war in 1767.

1770: First financial bank set up by Europeans, the Bank of Hindustan, established in Calcutta by Alexander and Company. 1809 saw the Presidency Bank and 1840 the Bank of Bombay. All three were commonly called Presidency Banks.

1772: The court of directors of the East



The British seal outside the Victoria Memorial

India Company appointed Warren Hastings as the president of the Bengal Council. In 1774 he became governor of Bengal and continued till 1785.

1772: The British East India Company set up its first Court of Adjudication in India in 1672, administering British law. In 1674 it ruled that the death penalty would be imposed for theft. In 1726 King George I of England empowered the Company to establish municipal corporations and Mayor's Courts in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. In 1774 the Mayor's Court in Calcutta was replaced by a Supreme Court which functioned till 1862.

1779: Mysore under Hyder Ali, the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad formed a short-lived confederacy for the expulsion of the British from India.

1782: With Hyder Ali's death, his son, Tipu became King of Mysore.

The French came forward to aid Mysore in its fight against the British. In 1783 Tipu Sultan regained Mangalore.

1784: The Asiatic Society was founded in Calcutta by Sir William Jones to track and preserve all kinds of documents relating to Asia. Jones was helped by the then Governor General of the East India Company, Warren Hastings. In 1935 the Society became the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and after Independence in 1947, it was called the Asiatic Society. It published Asiatic research documents from 1788 to 1839 and its journal has been published since 1832.

Asiatic Society of Bombay – a spin-off from the Literary Society of Bombay, founded in 1804 by Sir James Macintosh, recorder of Bombay. In 1829, it became a branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The first Indian elected to it was Maneckji Cursetji in 1840. The Society's journal has

been published since 1841. It became the Asiatic Society of Bombay after Independence.

1789: The British signed a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maratha Peshwa to join forces against Tipu Sultan with the promise that Mysore would be equally divided among the three. In 1790 the joint forces captured Dindigul and Palghat. The war ended in the Treaty of Srirangapatnam in 1792, by which Tipu had to surrender half his territory.

1793: Permanent Settlement. Promulgated in Bengal and Bihar by Lord Cornwallis, it fixed the revenue amounts to be paid by Zamindars annually.

1794: Vizianagaram revolt. Viziamam Rauze, king of Vizianagaram on the east coast revolted against British authority and was killed in battle. His successors Biradhadra Rauze (1830-33) and Jagannath Rauze (1832-34) also fought the British.

1799: The second war between Mysore and the British. The British laid siege to Srirangapatnam in April. Tipu was killed in battle in May and was cremated with the honour due to a Sultan – rare for an Indian ruler who opposed the traders - turned - rulers from England.

1799: Wazir Ali, nawab of Oudh (Avadh), forced by the British to abdicate his throne.

1837: The first modern Indian political association was set up with the formation of the Zamindari Association of Calcutta. A body of landlords, it changed its name in 1838 to Landholders' Association. It ceased to function in 1851.

1839: Ranjit Singh the 'Lion of Punjab' and a shrewd diplomat who even managed to secure the Kohinoor diamond from Shah Shuja the Afghan and with whom the Brit-

ish signed the Tripartite Treaty died.

1855: Armed rebellion by the Santhals of Bengal began in Bhognadighi. The rebellion was sustained for over six months. After the British suppressed it, a separate administrative unit was set up for a new district called the Santhal Parganas.

1858: On 2nd August the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act whereby all Indian territories of the East India Company were transferred to the British Crown. On 1st November India became part of the British Empire and the then governor general, Lord Canning, became governor general and viceroy.

1885: Indian National Congress (INC) founded by A.O. Hume and W.C. Bonnerji with 72 delegates from all over India.

1913: The GADR Party was founded in San Francisco, USA in 1913. It was an organization of militant Indians living abroad. In 1914 the Party sent arms to their comrades in India on the ship, *Komagata Maru*, which was attacked by the British as it attempted to dock at Calcutta. In 1930 the Party founded *Desb Darpan* a revolutionary magazine.

1916: Gandhi joined the Home Rule League founded by Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

1917: Gandhi launched the Satyagraha movement in Champaran protesting the indigo policy of the British in 1917.

South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known as the Justice Party, inaugurated in Madras in 1917. It was mainly aimed at fighting Brahminism.

1918: Rowlatt Report submitted in 1918, proposing more rigorous controls in administration.

The following year saw a Satyagraha movement against the Rowlatt Report. But before the movement could start (it was postponed twice) the proposals were accepted by a legislation.

1919: The unjust Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place, in which nearly 400 were killed and over 1,000 injured when British forces led by General Dyer opened fire on unarmed Satyagrahis protesting the Rowlatt measures.

1920: Gandhiji's slogans of 'Swaraj within one year' and 'Non-cooperation movement.' Later that year he started the movement against untouchability.

The same year the Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded in Tashkent with seven members, including M.N. Roy.

1921: Gandhi burned foreign goods in August to launch the Swadeshi movement.

That year also saw the first all India political

strike – when the Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay on 21st November. The following year Gandhi announced Civil Disobedience and withdrew it after the Chauri Chaura events in which agitators killed 22 policemen. Gandhiji was arrested for the first time.

1928: The visit of the Simon Commission, which had been prepared by Lord Irwin who had met with Gandhi and INC President S. Srinivasa Iyengar in November 1927 in preparation. The Commission was studying the British administration in India and was to propose reforms within it. The INC launched a series of protests against it when John Simon landed with his team. Following a lathi-charge against one such protest in Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai died of injuries sustained in the skirmish. The Simon Commission Report was published in 1930.

1929: Gandhi called for 'Purna Swaraj' (total freedom). The same year saw the Bardoli movement of peasants against higher taxes. Vallabhai Patel was one of the leaders.

1930: Gandhi initiated the Civil Disobedience Movement by a refusal to pay taxes.

He launched this with the Dandi March on 12th March, which defied the salt tax. 1930 saw the Chittagong armoury raid by the Indian Republican Army led by Surya Sen, in which 62 revolutionaries participated. This helped to accelerate the process of granting independence to India from British rule.

1931: Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed on 5th March whereby Gandhi pledged that the Civil Disobedience Movement would be called off and that the INC would attend the next British Commonwealth Round Table Conference. Irwin promised to release political prisoners.

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Sivaram Rajguru were executed by hanging on March 23, 1931, less than a month after the death of nationalist Azad on Feb 27.

1933: A separate Muslim state, to be called 'Pakistan' was first propounded this year. This proposal was made by Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, an Indian graduate in Cambridge, Britain, on January 28.

1934: Surya Sen and his comrade Tarakeswar Dastidar were hanged in January.

The same year, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan launched the Red Shirt movement in the North-west Frontier Province in support of the INC movement.

1935: Gandhi retired from active political life, to devote himself to the Harijan (deprived people) movement, khadi and village welfare.

The same year the new Government of India Act was passed. It became effective only in April, 1937 and following this, the INC participated for the first time in provincial and central legislatures.

1938: The first Planning Commission was constituted on the initiative of Subhash Chandra Bose who was Congress president at the time. It was suspended when World War II broke out and was resumed only in 1951.

1940: The 'Pakistan' Resolution was adopted by the Muslim League in March 1940. In 1934 the Congress Socialist Party was formed by Jai Prakash Narain.

1942: Stafford Cripps led the Cripps Mission a delegation to India in March to work out a political means for transfer of power to Indians, but the INC rejected its proposals presented in April the same year.

1946: Clement Attlee summoned Jawaharlal Nehru, Baldev Singh, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali for an extraordinary conference.

1946: Start of the Telangana struggle which lasted till 1952.

On 2nd June the following year, Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy, announced the partition of India, saying it was a decision taken in London earlier. On 3rd June various Indian leaders announced their acceptance of the proposal. In February the same year, Attlee had announced that it had been decided that the British would leave India before June 1948.

The India Independence Act was placed before the British Parliament on 5th July and passed on 18th July and received royal assent immediately.

On 14th August India was divided and Pakistan created with full independence.

On 15th August (after partition) India was declared Independent.

FRENCH

1611: The United French East India Company was formed. Pondicherry was founded in 1673 by Francois Martin and ultimately became the capital of the French settlements in India. In 1688 it was given a charter by Aurangzeb to establish a settlement at Chandernagore in Bengal. In 1746 De La Bourdonnais of France captured Madras from the British. The war over this region, begun in 1740, was concluded finally in 1748 after a peace treaty was drawn up between the two kings in Europe, restoring all lands to the original holders at the start of the war.

WEAPONS/ARMOUR

Weapons and armour have been used in different parts of India since ancient times. The same weapon was used with little variation throughout the country but was given many synonyms in different places.

ABBASI

Sword (Rajputs).

Synonyms: Asil, Dhoup, Firangi, Farang, Gupti (Marathas); Talwar (north-west, Marathas); Alamani (used probably by Hyder Ali's army); Jungheerdha, Kassi-gode, Nimcha, Saif, Shah nawaz khani (Hyder Ali); Goliah (Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan); Khanda or Pata-gauntlet sword, Sirohi, Tegha (Rajputs); Kora, Kukri (Nepal); Dao ordha (hill tribes of Assam and north-east); Parong latok (Assam and north-east); Shamsheer (North-West Frontier); Aydakatti (Dravidian races of southern India).

ANGIRKHA

Long coat worn over the armour (Mughal).

ASTRA

While ordinary weapons are known as shastra, when these weapons have extraordinary or supernatural powers they are known as astra. Indian myths and legends are replete with mentions of astra like Pashupatastra, Brahmastra, and Narayanastra. These were all weapons with super distinctive powers that epic characters won from gods through penance and prayers. The story of how Arjuna of the *Mahabharata* acquired his Pashupatastra from Shiva is a popular theme in temple sculptures and it inspired the Sanskrit epic poem *Kiratar-juniyam* (See Literature: Sanskrit).

BADEK PALEMBANG

Knife (Indian Archipelago). *Synonyms:* Chhura, Kama (Afghanistan), Wedung (Java, Indian Archipelago).

BALLAM

Spear (Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan).

Synonyms: Bhala, Birchha, Laange (Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan); Neza (north-west); Panj-mukh, five-headed spear (Sind); Pandi Ballam (Aboriginals, Andamans); Sangu (Dravidians); Tschehouta (Mughals).

BANDUK JAUHARDAR

Flint lock gun (Sind).

BANK

Dagger (Marathas).

Synonyms: Bundi-katari, Chhura kati, Pat-tani jamdadu, Khanjar (Marathas), Chila-



A collection of medieval daggers

num (Nepal), Jambiya (Dravidians of southern India), Kris (Indian Archipelago), Pichangatti (Dravidians), Qama (north-west), Saffdara (Tipu Sultan), Tooroom (Rajputs, Marathas), Zira bhonk (Sind).

BARCHHA

Lance (Mughals).

BHANJU

Coat of mail (Mughal).

BICHHWA

Dagger (Mughals).

Synonyms: Gupti kard (long dagger), Jamdhar (broad dagger), Katara, Khadwa, Jambiya, Narsingmoth (dagger used by Narasinga or Narasimha, one of the avatars of Vishnu (See Religion: Hinduism), Bank, Jamdhar sehlikanch (three-pointed dagger).

CHAKAR

Also Chakra— steel quoit, Vishnu's weapon.

Synonym: Chakram (Sikh).

DANGRA

Club (military games), also hatchet (a substitute for a Gorkha knife).

DASTANA

Steel gauntlets worn on one or both hands (Rajputs).

DHAL

Shield (used in the Mughal period from Babar to Aurangzeb).

Synonyms: Phari — cane shield (Mughals); Sipar (Mughals); Singauta, Madu, Maru — parrying shield (north-west).

DHARA

Mace (Marathas).

Synonyms: Gargaz (Marathas); Garz (north-west); Khundli Phansi (Marathas); Shashpar-globular mace (Mughals).

GARDANI

Shield for the horse (Mughal).

GHUGHWAH

A single piece coat for covering the body and the head (Mughal).

JAIVANA

A cannon on wheels, commissioned by Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur in 1720, has a 6.09 m barrel, with a 1 m diameter. It has a wheel diameter of 2.74 m, weighs 50 tonnes and requires 100 kg gunpowder for a single shot. The ball used for test firing was 50 kg. The cannon, which has a range of 35 km, has been test fired just once.

KANTHAH SHOBHA

Neck piece or gorget (Mughal).

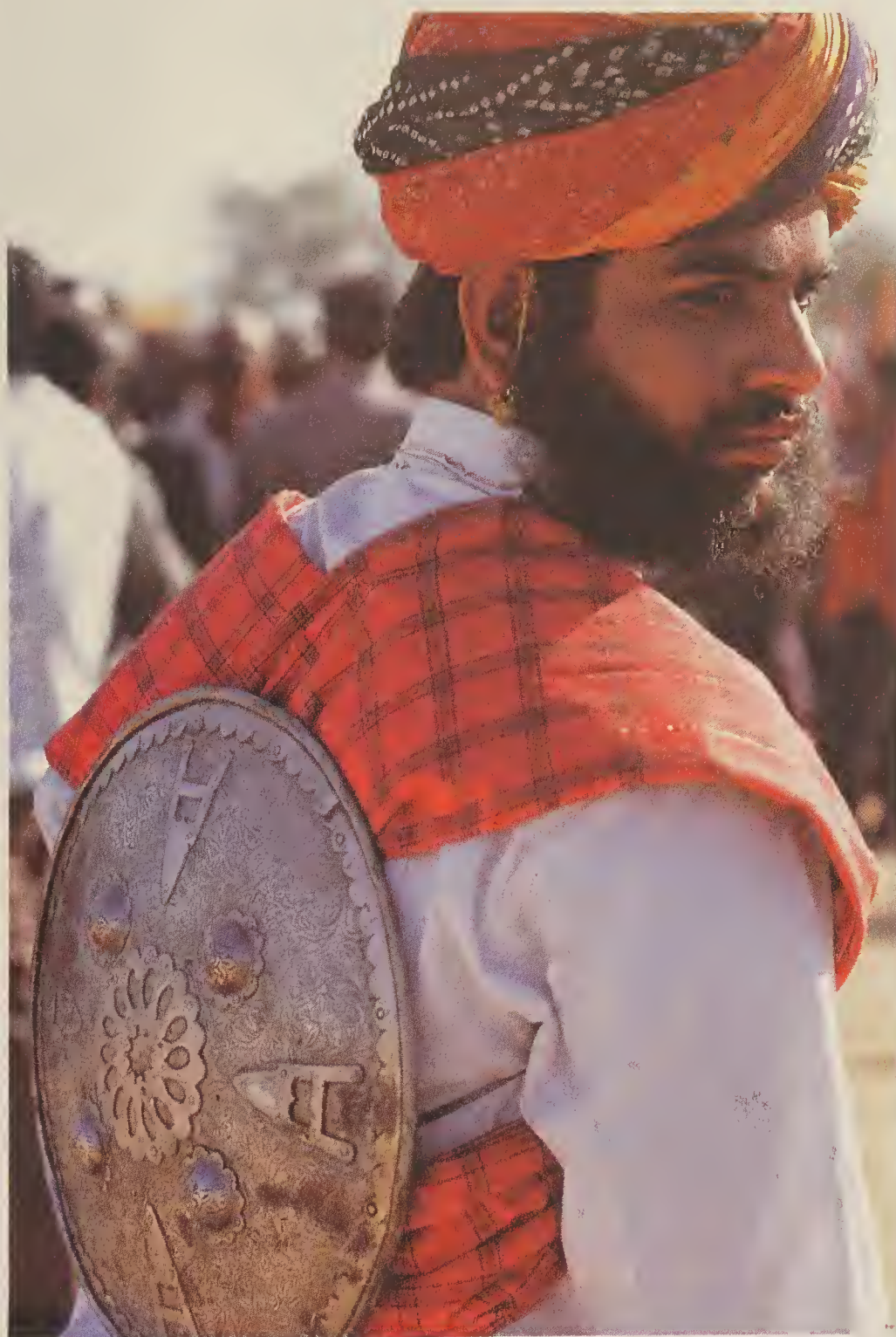
KASHKAH

Head protection for the horse (Mughal).

KATARIYA

Boomerang (Aboriginal and non-Aryan tribes of central India).

Synonyms: Katari — of wood (used by robbers, Dravidians of the south). Singa — (Dravidians of the south).



Man with a shield

MAKTA

Bow (Mughals).

Synonyms: Kaman (Mughals); Gulail, Ghulel (Nepal); Lezam – chain bow (used in military games, festivals).

MILAM

A 1 m long steel weapon used by the Garos (See Tribes), sharp on both sides of the blade. The leader of the dancers carries it ceremoniously. Though ornamental now, it was earlier used to cut one's way through the jungle.

PARUSA

Axe (Mughals).

Synonyms: Tabar-zaghnol, double axe (Mughals); Tarangala (Mughals); Venmuroo (Dravidians of south); Zaghnol, pointed axe (Mughals).

SANGIN

Bayonet-sword, attached as a bayonet to a gun (Nepal).

SELU

Spear. It was extensively used for hunting. The Garos of Assam can spear an animal with uncanny precision. It has the same length as an ordinary spear (See Tribes).

SEPI

The shield, carved out of wood with a handle fixed behind. Certain Garo images are carved on to the face of this shield. Milam and Sepi are considered the counterparts of the sword and the shield.

SHUTRNALS

Camel guns (Marathas).

TARKASH

Quiver (Mughals).

Synonyms: Thakroo (Nepal).

A photograph of an ancient Indian temple interior. The scene is filled with tall, intricately carved stone pillars that support a complex system of arches and beams. The architecture is highly detailed, with various carvings and inscriptions visible on the stone surfaces. In the center of the frame, a person is standing in a brightly lit opening, looking out towards a landscape. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a sense of depth and highlighting the textures of the stone.

HOLY PLACES

Tirthasthan

Religion is still the dominant influence in people's lives and sacred cities and pilgrim spots dot the land in profusion, from Rameswaram and St Thomas' Mount to Sravanabelagola and Amritsar to Ajmer Sharif and Jagannath Puri

BAHA'I

BAHA'I TEMPLE

The youngest of the world's religions, the Baha'i Faith finds its representation in India – in fact in Asia – in the magnificent temple in New Delhi. Built on 26 acres, the temple is patterned after a blossoming lotus. The main structure consists of three folds of nine concrete petals, each covered on the outside with Grecian marble. Set amidst landscaped gardens, the Baha'i temple is a haven of tranquillity. About 10,000 visitors are guided round the complex every day (See Archaeology/Architecture).

BUDDHIST TEMPLES

Although Buddhism originated in India, it soon became an all-Asian religion. Many of the holy Buddhist places are therefore to be found all over the continent from the Dalai Lama's palace, Potala in Tibet to the Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka. Other monasteries are to be found in Burma, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, China and Japan.

NALANDA

At one time this was the site of a famous Buddhist monastery in Bihar, founded in the Gupta period (See History: Dynasties). It was a great centre of learning till it was pillaged by the Muslims. During the 7th century it is said to have housed 10,000 students at any given time, all of whom were given free training and education.

SARNATH

One of Buddhism's holiest and earliest places and appropriately situated in the land of the founder's birth. Situated four miles north of Varanasi, UP, this is the place where the Buddha preached his famous Fire Sermon and Eightfold Path.

BODH GAYA

The holiest of the Buddhist shrines, Bodh Gaya in Bihar is the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment under the sacred Bo tree. Beginning with the visit of Ashoka the Great in 259 BC, the streams of pilgrims have been endless. In fact, the first temple built here was by Ashoka. The present Maha Bodhi temple was probably built in the 2nd century AD. The temple is approximately 55 m high resting on a 17 m base. Other monuments built by Buddhists of various countries have come up in Bodh Gaya (See Archaeology/Architecture).

KUSHINAGARA

A holy shrine sanctified by the passing away of the Buddha on Vaisakhi Purnima day in 544 BC or in 483 BC, Kushinagara is identified as the village Kasia in UP. In the course of his pilgrimage to holy Buddhist shrines, Ashoka visited Kushinagara and erected stupas and pillars here. When Huiyen Tsang visited this place in the 7th century, it was already in ruins. It has been excavated several times since then. The present Nirvana Temple was built by the Government of India as part of the 2,500th Buddha celebrations (See Archaeology/Architecture).

CHURCHES

BEGUM SAMRU'S CHURCH

The St Mary's Church in Sardhana (Meerut) is known by this name too. The Begum was the wife of Walter Reinhardt (nicknamed Sombre or Samru) – originally a German adventurer of the 18th century who collected an army of mercenaries and by selling his services to Indian potentates, carved out for himself the independent principality of Sardhana. On his death his Muslim wife became a Christian, was called Begum Samru and she had this church built in 1822.

BOM JESU

This church of Bom (good) Jesu is famous throughout the Roman Catholic world since it contains the tomb and mortal remains of St Francis Xavier, who in 1541 was given the task of spreading Christianity among the subjects of the Portuguese colonies in the east. He spent a few years spreading the faith along the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. He had only a few years in Goa before he sailed for Japan and died when he disembarked just off the coast of China in 1552 at the age of 46. His body was taken to Malacca and placed in the Church of Our Lady of the Mount. Four months later, on hearing his body was still fresh, his successor had his coffin opened and sent to Goa. After canonisation the body was transferred to the Bom Jesu Church. The body is exposed to the public once every 10 years. The next Exposition is in 1994 (See Archaeology/Architecture).

CHURCH OF OUR LADY

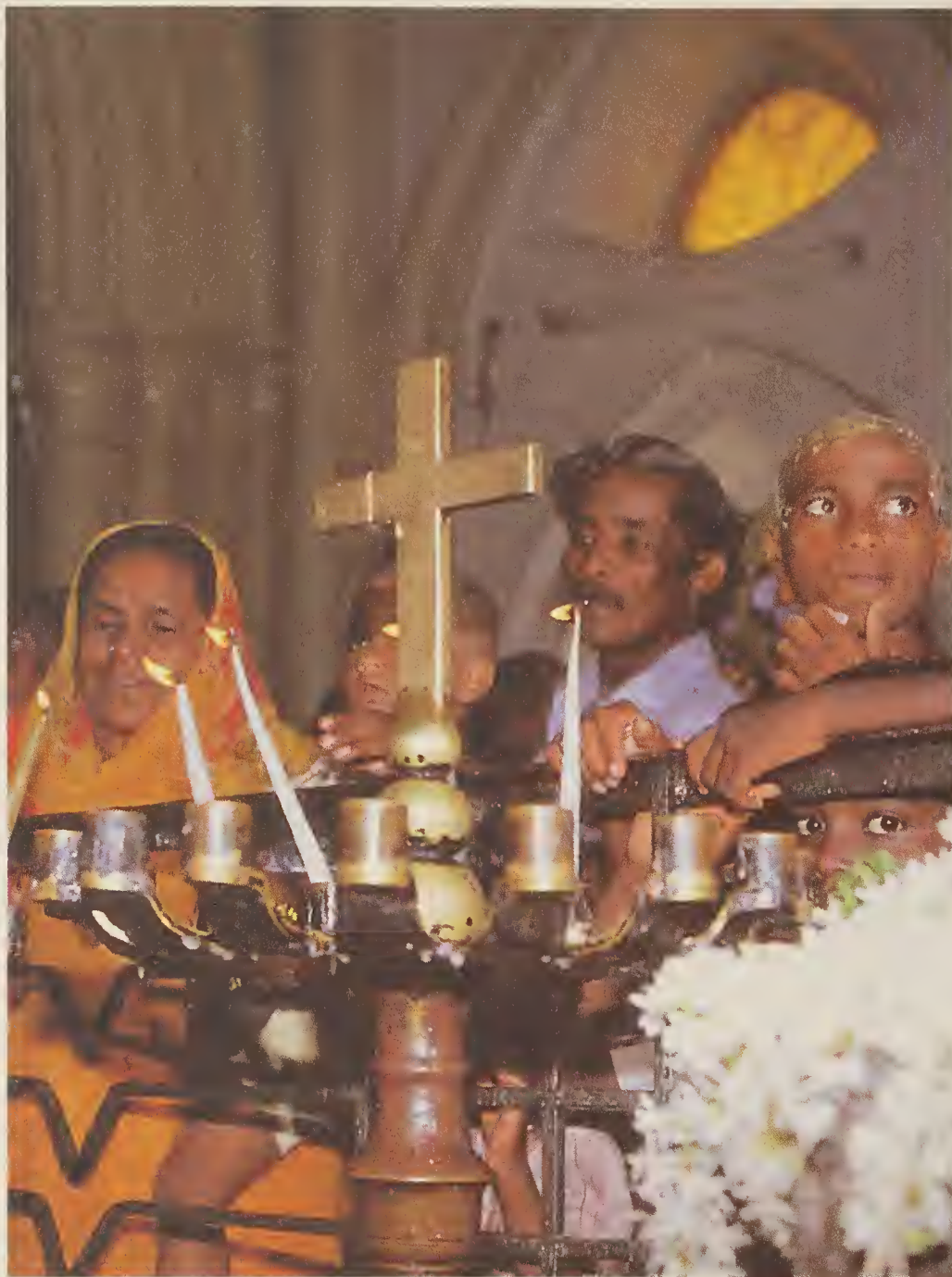
Located at Mokameh (Patna, Bihar) this church also dedicated to the Virgin (Mother of Divine Grace) attracts pilgrims from all parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa during the main feast held every November.

MOUNT MALAYATTOOR

Another important shrine though not as historic as the St Thomas' Mount, this church is located in the Western Ghats in central Kerala. Legend has it that the Apostle Thomas used to retreat to this wild spot in the midst of the forests and years after his death some hunters discovered the site with a cross and a perennial spring. A chapel was built on the site and it became a pilgrimage centre. Among Syrian Christians it is customary for newly weds to go to the shrine for the first feast after their wedding and seek blessings.

OUR LADY OF DOLORUS

Situated in Trichur, Kerala, this church is the largest in India with 11 altars in a row,



Church at Velankanni

five on either side of the main altar. Its double-storeyed aisles and decor make it a favourite tourist attraction in the state.

ST MARY'S BASILICA

Mount Mary at Bandra in Bombay is important for the Feast of the Virgin held every September also popularly called the Bandra Fair.

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Church building by Protestants in India had humble beginnings. St Mary's Church in Madras was the first, built in 1680.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

The first Anglican cathedral, it was built in 1847 at Calcutta. The cathedral enjoyed royal and viceregal patronage and has

many historical associations and monuments commemorating the visits of royalty during the days of British power in India.

ST THOMAS' MOUNT

This is the most important and historic Christian shrine in India. Located at Madras, it is the site of the death of the Apostle Thomas. There are references to the Mount dating back to the 4th century.

VELANKANNI

The Church of Our Lady of Health at Velankanni (Tamil Nadu) is known as the Lourdes of south India because of the many miraculous cures attributed to the shrine. Not just Christians but even Hindus and Muslims frequent the place with votive offerings.

JAINA SHRINES

CAVE TEMPLES

Jaina cave temples are found in Bihar, Orissa and southern India, the places where Jainism originally thrived. The Jainas excavated caves with almost primitive implements and carved out ornamental shrines and abodes for their monks and ascetics. The caves of Ellora are standing testimony to the excellence attained by the Jainas (See Archaeology/Architecture; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture – Ellora Sculpture).

DILWARA

Situated on Mount Abu in Rajasthan, these temples were built entirely in marble in 1031 AD and are regarded as superb architectural specimens. Known as Vimal Vasahi, these temple are dedicated to Adinatha and Neminatha respectively. The intricate carvings on the walls illustrate scenes from Jaina literature.

KHAJURAHO

These temples are known for their architectural splendour (See Archaeology/Architecture). The Parsvanatha temple here is the best known Jaina temple with an ornamental throne and playful sculptures.

PARSVANATHA

The most important of the Jaina shrines is at Halebid in Karnataka. Dedicated to Saint Parsvanatha, the temple is a fine example of Hoysala architecture (See Archaeology/Architecture, History: Dynasties).



Dilwara temples

RANAKPUR

A beautiful temple in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, the exquisite carvings on the pillars explain the different aspects of Jainism. Built in 1436, the temple is dedicated to Adinatha (See Religion: Jainism).

SRAVANABELAGOLA

The famous, colossal 17 m high statue of Gomateshwara situated on top of Vin-dhyagiri Hills, was till recently the world's tallest monolithic statue. Jains believe that in the 3rd century BC Bhadrabahu, the great Jaina saint, led his people to escape a great famine. It was here that Chandragupta Maurya (See History: Dynasties) followed the Jaina path for 12 years before his death. The statue represents Bahubali, the son of the Thirthankara Rishabadeva and was built in the 10th century. A rare ritual is the bathing of the statue (abhisheka) with curd and milk once in 25 years (See Archaeology/Architecture; Religion: Jainism).

OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES

PALITANA, Gujarat.

RED TEMPLE, Delhi.

The shrines at SHRI MAHAVEERJI in Sawaimadhopur at Padampura in Jaipur district and at DEHRA (Tijara) in Alwar district, all in Rajasthan.

Jain temples at JAISALMER in Rajasthan.

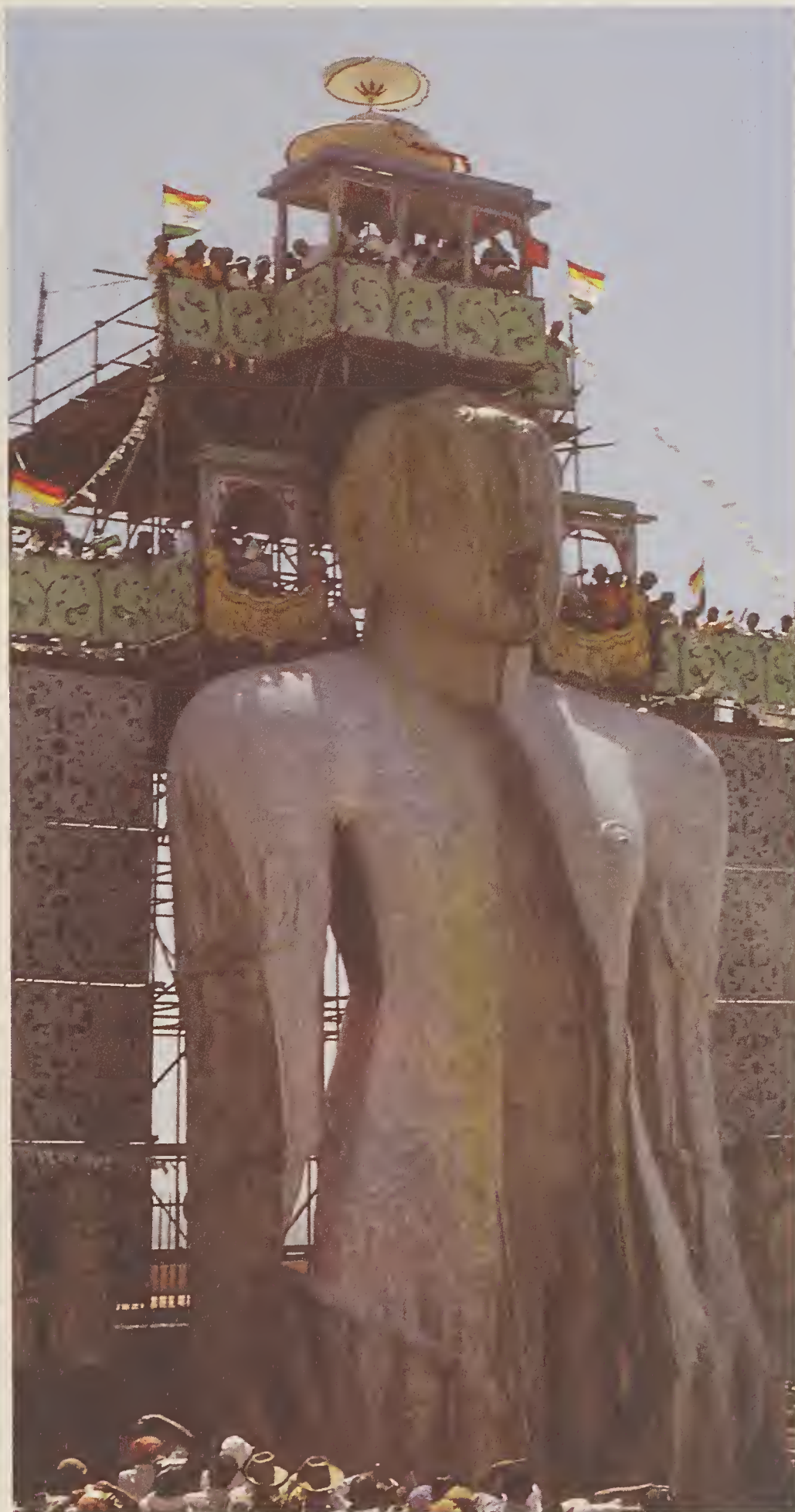
HASTINAPUR TEMPLE, UP.

Temples in SONAGIR in Madhya Pradesh.

GOMMAT GIRI, Indore in Madhya Pradesh.

Caves at UDAIGIRI and KHANDAGIRI, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

AHICHHATRA, Bareilly in UP.



Gomateshwara of Sravanabelagola

MOSQUES

ADINA MASJID, BENGAL

This mosque in Pandua (Malda district) was of great significance in medieval days in Bengal. It was built in 1369 by Sultan Sikandar Shah (See History: Dynasties) and is one of the largest mosques in India (See Archaeology/Architecture).

ANDU MASJID, BIJAPUR

Lit. egg mosque. It derives its name from its egg-shaped dome. Built in 1608 by Itibar Khan, one of the ministers of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, it has an unusual building plan.

ARHAI-DIN-KA-JHOPRA, AJMER

The mosque resembles the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in style and construction. It is the second earliest mosque, also built by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1199. Iltutmish added on a seven-arch screen with remarkable workmanship in 1230.

ATALA MASJID, JAUNPUR

Construction began in 1377 and was completed only in 1408 in the reign of Ibrahim Sharqi (1401–40). The Atala Masjid represents the earliest and finest examples of the Sharqi architectural style and serves as a model for subsequent mosques of this place.

BARA GUMBAD, DELHI

Situated in the enclosure of the Lodi tombs by the side of a square-domed building called Bara Gumbad, this mosque was built in 1494 by Mughal Buwa Makhduma-i-Jahan, widow of Sultan Bahlol Lodi (1451–89). Though of moderate size, the mosque has interesting architectural features with a fluted design similar to the Qutub Minar (See Archaeology/Architecture).

BARA SONA MOSQUE, BENGAL

It derives its name from the gilding that once adorned its domes. Locally it is known as 'baradwari' – twelve doors, though it contains only arched openings.

BEGUMPURI MASJID, DELHI

Named after Begumpur village, where it is located, this mosque is said to have been built by Khan-i-Jahane who built the Kalan Masjid.

CHAMKATTI, BENGAL

This mosque in Gaur is among the early ones built in the ornamental Bengal style around 1575.

CHHOTA SONA MASJID, BENGAL

Now just within the Bangladesh border, it was built by Wali Mohammad sometime during the reign of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah (1493–1529).



Jami Masjid, Mandu

FORT JAMI MASJID, GULBARGA

Ranked as one of the finest mosques in India, it was built in 1367 in the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani (1358–75).

JAMAAT-KHANA, DELHI

On the western side of the enclosure of the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin, this mosque was built of red sandstone in the reign of Ala-ud-din Khilji (1296–1316) (See History: Dynasties).

JAMALI-KAMALI, DELHI

Situated in the Mehrauli area, the construction of this mosque (1528–29) architecturally marked the phase of transition from the style of Moth-ki-Masjid to the famous Qala-i-Kuhna mosque.

JAMI MASJID, AHMEDABAD

Built in 1424 by Ahmad Shah (1411–41), this mosque once regarded as the most beautiful in Asia, and as one of the most impressive structures, is now surrounded by houses and commercial outlets. An important feature of the mosque is the perfection of the stone screen for admitting light into the building – a typical characteristic of Gujarat mosques.

JAMI MASJID, BIJAPUR

Started in the reign of Ali Adil Shah (1558–80), certain portions were built later and decorated in the time of Muhammad Adil

Shah (1627–56). Though it remained incomplete the mosque is known for its fine proportions.

JAMI MASJID, CHAMPANER, GUJARAT

Architecturally regarded as the finest in the state, the mosque is believed to have been built around the same time as the Jami Masjid in Ahmedabad.

JAMI MASJID, DELHI

Built by Shah Jahan, this mosque which is ranked as the most eminent and splendid, took six years to construct (1650–56) and cost ten lakh rupees. It was built after the transfer of the capital from Agra to Delhi (See History).

JAMI MASJID, JAUNPUR

The last of the great mosques of Jaunpur, it was also built by the last Sharqi ruler Husain Shah (1458–79). In plan and design, it is a larger version of the Atala Masjid.

JAMI MASJID, MANDU

Started by Hoshang Shah (1406–35) but completed only by his successor Mahmud Shah I (1439–69) in 1440, the mosque has a simple grandeur to it.

JAMI MASJID, SAURASHTRA

An imposing mosque in Mangrol looked upon as the finest in Saurashtra. It was built entirely of stone in 1384 in the reign of

Feroz Tughlaq by his officer Izzuddin (See History: Dynasties).

JAMI MASJID, SRINAGAR

The mosque typifies wood construction in Kashmir. It was originally built by Sultan Sikandar in 1393-94 but later expanded by his son Zainul Abidin (1420-70). It was burnt down thrice in the 15th and 17th centuries, and rebuilt each time.

JAMI MOSQUE, FATEHPUR SIKRI

The mosque (built in 1571) is not just one of the largest in India but also one of the magnificent specimens of architecture in the reign of Akbar. In the court of the mosque is another famous monument, the white marble tomb of the celebrated saint, Sheikh Salim Chisti (See Archaeology/Architecture; History: Dynasties; Sages and Saints).

KALAN MASJID, DELHI

After the Jami Masjid, this is the most prominent structure in the old city. Situated within the Turkman Gate, it was built by Junan Shah called Khan-i-Jahan, prime minister of Feroz Tughlaq in 1387. This mosque has a fortress-like appearance, with rounded bastions at the four corners and a projected entrance.

KHIRKI MASJID, DELHI

Situated in the Khirki village, this mosque was also built by Khan-i-Jahan and resembles the Kalan Masjid. It is constructed like the Jamaat-khana Masjid near the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin on a cruciform (See Sages and Saints).

LAL DARWAZA MOSQUE, JAUNPUR

Lit. red gate mosque, constructed in 1450, by Bibi Raji, the queen of Sultan Mahmud Shah who reigned between 1436 and 1458. The smallest mosque in Jaunpur, it is designed after the much bigger Atala Mosque.

MAKKA MASJID, HYDERABAD

The imposing mosque was started in 1617 by Muhammad Qutab Shah (1612-26) and continued during the reign of his successors Abdullah (1626-72) and Abul Hasan (1672-87). It was finally completed by Aurangzeb in 1693. It is one of the loftiest mosques of the Deccan.

MALIKA JAHAN'S MOSQUE, BIJAPUR

Popularly called Zanjiri Mosque because of its long chain ornamentation, the mosque is believed to have been built by Ibrahim Adil Shah II in 1587 in honour of Princess Jahan Begum.

MASJID-I-ALA, SRIRANGAPATNAM

The mosque is situated close to the ruins of the palace of Tipu Sultan in Mysore (1783-99) (See History: Dynasties). Built by the



Sidi Said's Mosque at Ahmedabad

sultan in 1786-87, the mosque is regarded as the most impressive of Islamic monuments of south India.

MOSQUE OF MALIK MUGHIS, MANDU

Built by Malik Mughis, prime minister of Hoshang Shah of Malwa (1406-35), this mosque is considered to be the finest example of the Malwa style, and a trend-setter for future mosques of the region.

MOTH-KI-MASJID, DELHI

Situated in the village of the same name it is believed to have been built by Miyan Bhuwa, prime minister of Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517). Regarded as the epitome of all that is best in the architecture of the Lodi period, this was the style that found perfection finally in the Qala-i-Kuhna mosque of Sher Shah (See History: Dynasties).

MOTI MASJID, AGRA

This mosque built by the greatest builder of the Mughals, Shah Jahan took seven years to construct (1658-65) and cost three lakh rupees. It is classified by architects as one of the 'purest and most elegant' works in marble (See Archaeology/Architecture).

QALA-I-KUHNA, DELHI

One of the few monuments in the Old Fort or Purana Qila. Built by Sher Shah in 1541, it represents the fully developed and most imposing form of Lodi architecture. This was also the last great pre-Mughal mosque of Delhi and one of the finest in the country (See History: Dynasties).

QUWWAT-UL-ISLAM, DELHI

Considered the earliest extant Muslim monument in India, this mosque, close to

the famous Qutub Minar (See Archaeology/Architecture), was also built by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in 1206. The mosque was extended by Iltutmish in 1230 (See History: Dynasties).

RANI SABRAI'S MOSQUE, AHMEDABAD

Delicate, carved structure and perfect harmony distinguishes this mosque, often called a 'gem'. Built in 1514 by Rani Sabrai, widow of Sultan Mahmud I (1458-1511) the mosque, though moderate in size, is a splendid architectural specimen.

SIDI SAID'S MOSQUE, AHMEDABAD

This beautiful but small and incomplete mosque was built by Sheikh Said Sultani in the last year of the Gujarat Sultanate (1572-73), during the time of Muzaffar III (1561-73). Its chief claim to fame lies in the design of its stone window screens. (See Archaeology/Architecture; History: Dynasties).

TOLI MASJID, HYDERABAD

Built in 1671 by Musa Khan, an official of Abdullah Qutub Shah, the mosque is typical of the Qutub Shahi construction style.

TANTIPARA MOSQUE, BENGAL

Situated in Gaur, it is a contemporary of the Chamkatti mosque and was built by one Mirsad Khan. It is considered to be the finest in Bengal for its detail and surface terracotta design.

TAKHTS (SIKH)

Seats of authority, the outcome of historical growth. The Takhts with their Gurdwaras are headed by the most respected religious men called Jathedars. Each Takht has its own jurisdiction and can excommunicate offenders of the faith called 'Tankhaiyas.' The decree is called Tankha. A tall flagpost with a saffron flag bearing the Sikh insignia stands at the entrance to these Takhts. These Gurdwaras are open to people of all castes and creeds. There are five Takhts. These are comparable to the Hindu Maths where the Shankaracharyas hold religious sway (See Religion: Sikhism).

The most important Takht, the Akal Takht, was established by Guru Hargobind Singh in 1609 opposite the gate of Harmandir Sahib in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. The Darbar Sahib is the most hallowed place for Sikhs. Built on a small island in the middle of a pool at Amritsar, it was erected at the end of the 16th century. Ranjit Singh ornamented its walls and

covered its roof with gilt in 1802 AD. In keeping with Sikhism there is no idol within. The place of honour is given to the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The construction of the Darbar Sahib was started by Guru Ram Das and completed by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth guru.

Patna Sahib, the second Takht was originally the residence of Guru Teg Bahadur and the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh.

Sri Kesargarh Sahib is the third seat of authority in Anandpur, Punjab. It was here that the Khalsa (the Sikh faith) was organised by Guru Gobind Singh.

Sri Huzur Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh breathed his last in this Takht.

Damdama Sahib, the fifth seat of authority, situated in Nanded in Maharashtra is where Guru Gobind Singh prepared a version of the *Adi Granth*. Some of his weapons are housed here. At his time of his death, he decreed the holy book, the *Granth Sahib*, be given perpetual succession.



The Golden Temple at Amritsar

TEMPLES & PILGRIM PLACES

AMARNATH

One of the jyotirlingas in Kashmir where the natural Shivalinga in a cave is covered with ice. The temple really comes alive on Shravana Purnima day (See Festivals) when a fair is held in the temple precincts.

BADRINATH

Built around the shrine of Vishnu at an altitude of 3,062 m in the Himalayan ranges, it is on the way to Kedarnath with a slight diversion. Although Badrinath is mentioned in the *Skanda Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranas) which says, "There are many shrines on earth, but none has been, nor will be like Badrinath," the place came under strong Buddhist influence and it was Shankaracharya of the 9th century who re-established the idol of Vishnu at Badrinath. Since then the temple is seen as one of the four 'Dhams' or sacred places. As a rule the position of head priest of the temple has been the prerogative of the Namboodiri community of Kerala.

BELUR MATH

Situated to the north of Calcutta city, on the west bank, this is the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. Founded by Ramakrishna's most ardent disciple Swami Vivekananda in 1899 (See People: Great Indians), the Belur complex is supposed to represent a church, a mosque and a temple depending on how you look at it.

BHADRAKALI AMMAN

Bhadrakali is another name for Shiva's consort, Parvati. Shiva once granted a boon to two of his asura (demon) devotees, that they could only be destroyed by a woman. Considering themselves invincible, they went about creating trouble. Seeing the way they were misusing their boon, Shiva requested his wife to take the form of Uma, the ascetic and destroy the demons. Parvati triumphed over the demons and to commemorate this, the temple at Pondicherry was dedicated to Bhadrakali (Parvati in her destructive form).

BULL TEMPLE

Situated on Bugle Hill, this is one of Bangalore's oldest temples, built by Kempegowda, the founder of Bangalore city in the Dravidian style. It contains a huge monolith of Nandi (bull) similar to the one on Chamundi Hill in Mysore.

CHAITANYA PREM SANSTHAN

A big establishment of the Madhava Gaudiya (followers of Chaitanya; See Sages and Saints) on the banks of the Yamuna in Brindavan in UP, it is a great cultural centre for

the performing arts of the Braj region and the theatre (See Performing Arts: Theatre). Scholars from all over the world flock to the academic centre founded by the Goswamis of the Sansthan.

DAKSHA MAHADEVA

The most important temple in the holy city of Hardwar. The story goes that Daksha, father-in-law of Shiva, failed to invite Shiva to a yajna or sacrifice he was conducting. Sati (Shiva's consort otherwise known as Parvati) was so enraged by this, she immolated herself at the place, where the temple now stands.

DAKSHINESHWAR KALI

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (See Sages and Saints) worshipped Kali in this temple across the river from Belur Math. The temple was built in 1847.

DRAUPADI AMMAN

As the name suggests, this temple at Vellavari near Pondicherry honours Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). The main feature of the festival held here is fire-walking, as Draupadi is believed to be a product of the sacrificial fire ritual performed by her father, Drupada.

DURGA TEMPLE

Commonly known as the Monkey temple on account of the many simians that have made it their abode, this temple in Varanasi was built in the 18th century by a maharani of Bengal. The structure is in stained ochre red.

DWARAKA

The legendary abode of Krishna is situated in west Gujarat and is one of the four Dhams. This was the city of purity and divinity which was destroyed by floods after the death of Krishna. Today this small town by the sea is called Dwaraka with a temple dedicated to Krishna.

EKALINGA

The magnificent temple of Ekalingji at Kailashpuri in Rajasthan has a Shivalinga with four faces. This is a family deity of the Udaipur royal house and it is believed to have been built by Bappa Raval, the founder of the dynasty. The linga has the distinction of being 'eka' or 'the only one' because there is no other Shivalinga within a radius of 16 km. The Udaipur Ranas ruled in the name of 'Ekalingji'.

EKAMBARESHWARA

One of the largest temples in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, dedicated to Shiva, it covers nine hectares of land (See Kamakshiamman). Its gopuram (inside tower)



The sacred peak of Nanda Devi

measures 56.80 m. Construction of this temple was originally started by the Pallavas but later taken up by the Cholas (See History: Dynasties). The name of the temple is derived from Eka Amra Nathar (the lord of the mango tree) and in one of the enclosures, there is an ancient mango tree with its four branches representing the four Vedas (See Religion: Hinduism). The fruit of each of the branches is said to differ in taste and the tree is believed to be 3,500 years old.

GANGOTRI

Situated at an altitude of 3,140 metres, the temple of Ganga stands on the right bank of the Bhagirathi river, which eventually becomes the holy river Ganga. Beyond this are the great pilgrimage centres Nandavan and Tapovan.

GAUMUKH

On the road to Mount Abu (Rajasthan) a small stream flows from the mouth of a marble cow, from which the shrine derives its name. The temple also has a marble Nandi (bull, Shiva's vehicle) and the tank located here is said to be the site of the sacrificial fire conducted by the sage Vasishta from which four of the great Rajput clans are believed to have been born. An image of Vasishta here is flanked by magnificent figures of Rama and Krishna (See Religion: Hinduism).

GAYA

A tirthasthan or holy place on the bank of the river Phalgu in Bihar. Sraadha (death rituals) performed here are considered

most meritorious. In fact, there is a whole concept of Gaya sraadha attached to funeral rites. By doing this a person is supposed to be blessed by his ancestors and achieves moksha or liberation from the cycle of life and death (See Myths and Legends).

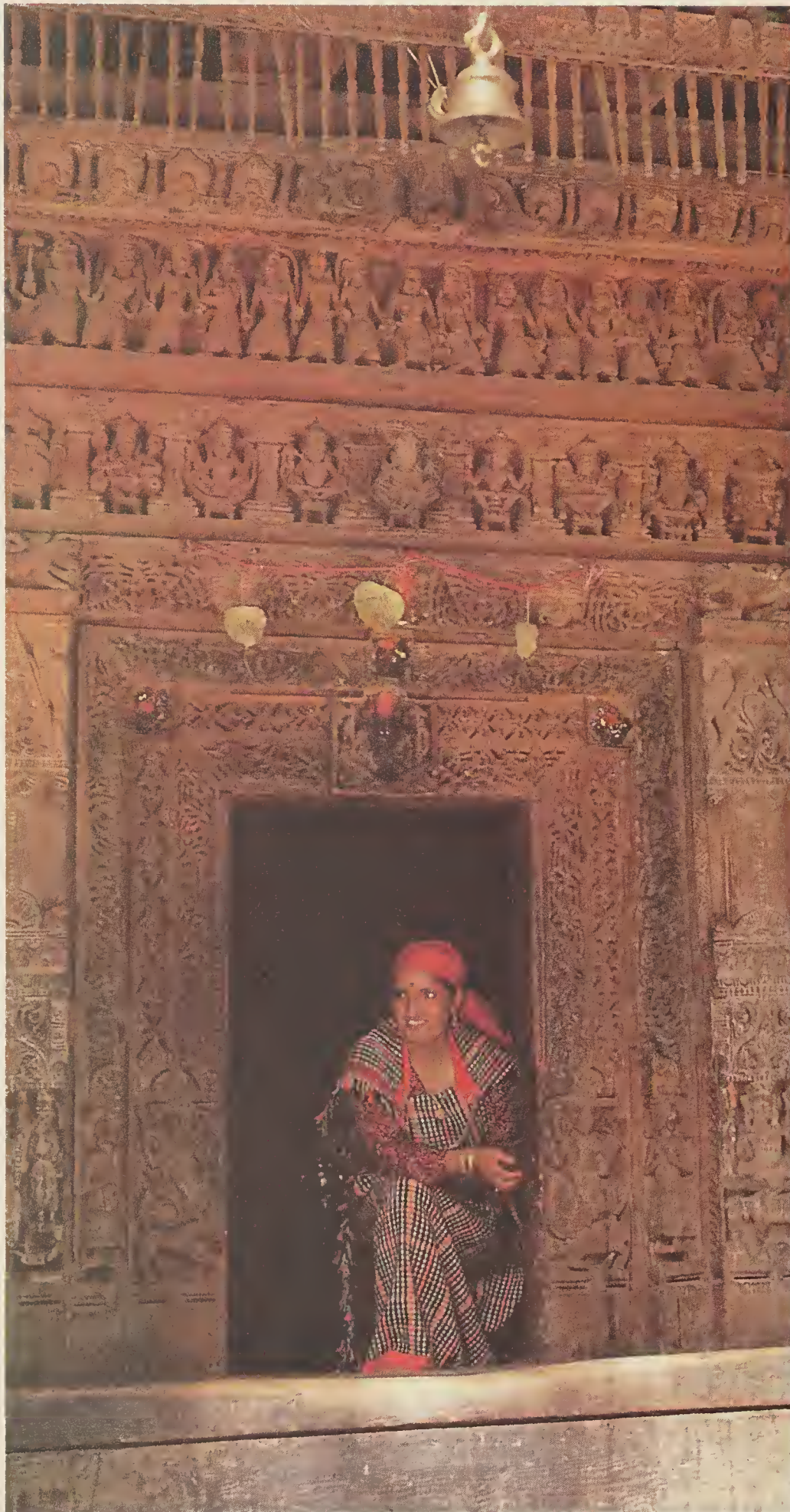
GURUVAYUR KRISHNA

A simple but ancient temple of Kerala, its origins are lost in obscurity but judging by the name of the town, the temple is said to have been founded by Guru (the preceptor of gods) and Vayu (god of the winds). When Krishna realised the purpose of his incarnation was over he asked his favourite disciple to take the image which Vasudeva (Krishna's father) was worshipping at Dwaraka and install it in an appropriate place. Krishna promised to bless all those who worshipped at this new site. Guruvayur on the banks of the Rudra-tirtha was chosen for the installation. The temple attracts many devotees.

HAMPI

A popular pilgrimage centre in Karnataka on the bank of the Tungabhadra. It is believed to be the capital city of the monkey kings Bali and Sugriva of *Ramayana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics).

In the 14th century it became the capital of the Vijayanagara empire (See History: Dynasties). The ruins of the once famous city is now spread over 26 sq km and is often described as an open-air museum. Temples of Hazara Rama, Virupaksha Pattabhirama, Vithala and Hemakuta are all situated here. Monoli-



Hidimba Devi temple priestess

thick images of Lakshmi and Ganesha as well as vestiges of palaces, bazaars, stables and fortifications are still seen – an everlasting testimony to the seat of art and culture that Hampi once was (See Archaeology/ Architecture).

HARDWAR

A holy town on the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh also called Haridwar. Like Gaya, Hardwar is also an important place for sraadh (death rites) and for immersing the mortal remains (ashes) of a deceased relative in the Ganga.

HIDIMBA DEVI

A sombre, wooden temple in a forest clearing in Manali (Himachal Pradesh). Also known as the Dhungri temple, it is the site of a major Kulu Valley festival in May.

JAKHU

Dedicated to Hanuman, this temple on the highest point on the Shimla ridge, is appropriately home to hordes of monkeys.

JAGANNATHA

Dedicated to Krishna in Puri, Orissa, this temple is one of the four Dhams or Mahakshetras (important pilgrimage centres.) The other three are Badrinath (north), Dwaraka (west) and Rameswaram (south). Apart from Krishna, the temple also houses images of Balarama (his brother) and Subhadra (his sister). An unusual aspect of the images is that they have no limbs. The temple is best known for its annual Rath Yatra (chariot procession) when the gods are taken from the Puri temple to their country residence at Gundicha Bari two miles away with great fanfare (See Festivals).

JAGDISH

Located within 150 m of the entrance to the city palace in Udaipur, Rajasthan, this Indo-Aryan temple was built by Maharana Jagat Singh in 1651 (See History: Dynasties) and it enshrines a black stone image of Vishnu as Jagannatha (Lord of the Universe). There is a brass image of the Garuda (mythical bird) in a shrine at the front of the temple, and the steps are flanked by elephants.

KAILASANATHA

Dedicated to Shiva, this temple in the sacred city of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu was built by the Pallava king Rayasimha in the late 7th century (See History: Dynasties). King Mahendra Varman III made additions to it later. It is a good specimen of simple Dravidian architecture that is also seen at Mahabalipuram (See Archaeology/ Architecture).

KALAHASTI

Lit. 'the hand of time' – the 'great annihilator,' this Shiva temple in Andhra Pradesh is near the foot of the Tirupati Venkateswara temple. Shivaratri is celebrated here in a very big way (See Festivals).

KALAPRIYANATHA

Situated at Ujjain in MP, Shiva, in this temple as at Kalahasti, is worshipped as the ultimate destroyer. The philosophy underlying this is that 'all those who are born must die.'

KALI

The temple at Kalighat (from which the city Calcutta is believed to have got its name), is believed to be 200 years old. The legend goes that when Kali's (also called Parvati, Shiva's wife) corpse was cut into bits, one of her fingers fell here (See Daksha Mahadeva Temple).

KAMAKSHIAMMAN

Dedicated to Parvati, this temple in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu is famous for its annual car festival. The temple has a golden gopuram (ornate tower) in the centre. It is one of the seats of the Shankaracharya known as Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham (See Archaeology/Architecture; Myths and Legends; Saints and Sages).

KAMAKHYA

The best known temple of Guwahati (Assam), situated on Nilachal Hill, 10 km from the city. A centre of Shakti (energy) worship and Tantrik Hinduism, it is believed that when Shiva was carrying his wife's corpse (See Daksha Mahadeva Temple) a part of the body fell here. The temple was rebuilt in 1665 after being destroyed by Muslim invaders.

KANYAKUMARI

A picturesque temple, it is located at the southernmost tip of India. The story goes that Parvati in her incarnation as Devi Kanya did penance here to secure the hand of Shiva. She was unsuccessful and vowed to remain a kanya (virgin). Another interesting story is centred round the deity's nose-pin, a dazzling diamond, which caught the rays of the sun through an opening in the temple and shone brightly out towards the sea. Once, a ship, mistaking it for a lighthouse was wrecked. Thereafter, the opening was walled to prevent further calamities.

KAPALEESHWARAR KOIL

A landmark temple in Mylapore, Madras, where Shiva is known as one who wears a skull (Kapaleesh). The story goes that Shiva was angered by the attention that Parvati gave to the peacocks that danced at the site,



Kumbha Mela at Hardwar

in preference to his discourses. His curse turned her into a peahen. In expiation, Parvati as a peahen, worshipped Shiva in the form of a linga till her curse wore off. People thus worship here for deliverance from difficulties.

KASHI VISHWANATH

A pilgrimage to this famous Shiva temple in Varanasi is believed to cleanse one of all sins (See Myths and Legends).

KEDARNATH

One of the 12 jyotirlingas (See Myths and Legends) situated at an altitude of 3,476m in the snow-bound peaks of the Himalayas. The belief is that this temple was built by the Pandavas (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata) as an act of atonement after the Kurukshetra war. The temple stands at the head of the Mandakini river.

KHAJURAHO

With superb examples of Indo-Aryan architecture, this temple town in MP is a major tourist attraction. Built mainly during the Chandela period, (a dynasty which survived for five centuries before falling to the onslaught of Islam), almost all date between 950 and 1050 AD. The exquisitely carved temples are dedicated to every deity in the Hindu pantheon. (See Archaeology/Architecture – Khajuraho; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

KUMBHA MELA

This has reference to the churning of the nectar, amrita manthana (See Religion: Hinduism-Kshirasagara Manthana). It is believed that drops of amrita (nectar) fell in four places – Prayag, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain. At all these places, once in 12 years, Kumbha melas or 'pitcher festivals' are held. When they are held once in six years they are called ardha-kumbha. Thousands throng these cities for it is considered most auspicious to have a bath in the holy rivers during this period.

KUSHINAGARA

Or Kasia in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh is where Buddha died in his 80th year. A large mound locally known as Ramabhar is believed to be the stupa built at the place of cremation.

LAKSHMI NARAYAN

An ostentatious temple in New Delhi constructed by the industrialist G. D. Birla in 1938, it is dedicated to Vishnu and Lakshmi. The temple is considered a marvel in marble.

LINGARAJ

Built in 1104 in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, it is dedicated to Tribhuvaneshwar (lord of the three worlds). The granite block which represents the deity is ritually bathed daily with water, milk and bhang or marijuana,



The Lingaraj temple, Bhubaneswar

an intoxicant (See Nature: Herbs and Natural Remedies).

MAHABALIPURAM

The beautiful shore temples of Mahabalipuram (also called Mamallapuram) in Tamil Nadu represent the final phase of Pallava art and were built in the 7th century during the reign of Rajasimha (See Archaeology/Architecture; History: Dynasties).

MAHALAKSHMI

The oldest temple in Bombay, which appropriately, in this commercial and industrial city, is dedicated to the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. The image of the goddess along with those of her sisters is believed to have been found in the sea.

MARUTHAMALAI

A hillock off Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu is the abode of Murugan or Kartikeya (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranic Gods). A tired and thirsty ascetic once rested under a maruthu tree and prayed for water. Immediately water started gushing out from the roots of the tree. He thanked Murugan and called him the 'Lord of the forests.' The shrine built at the site came to be called Maruthamalai after the tree (See Palani).

MATHURA

The legendary city of Krishna's birth. Al-

most the entire town is dedicated to the lord and the place comes alive on Krishnash-tami or Janmashtami – the birthday of the God (See Festivals).

MEENAKSHIAMMAN

This colossal temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu has both legendary and architectural significance. Its hall of a thousand pillars dating back to the 16th century embodies some of the finest temple art and sculpture. The musical pillars, which on being struck, give out clear musical notes and the gigantic gopurams are unparalleled (See Archaeology/Architecture).

Both the goddess Meenakshi as well as the golden lotus tank in the precincts of the temple are said to have inspired the Tamil saint-poet Tiruvalluvar in his lyrical *Kural* (See Literature: Tamil).

MODHERA

The Sun temple in Modhera (near Ahmedabad in Gujarat) was built by king Bhimadeva I (1026-27) and destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni in the same century (See History: Dynasties). It bears some resemblance to the well known Konarak Sun temple in Orissa. It has been so designed that the sun shines on the image of Surya (Sun god) at dawn during the time of the equinoxes.

MUTHUMARIAMMAN

A temple in Pondicherry which generally draws the agricultural community to worship the goddess.

NATARAJA

Shiva as Nataraja or Lord of the Dance is worshipped at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu (See Performing Arts: Dance – Bharata Natyam). The temple is famous for its Arudra Darshan festival, commemorating the day Nataraja revealed himself to the outcaste, Saint Nandanar, proving to all the world that it is not by birth but by devotion that one attains divinity.

NATHDWARA

Situated about 48 km from Udaipur (Rajasthan) this important 18th century Vishnu temple (Sri Nath) is a popular pilgrimage centre. The black stone image of Vishnu was brought here from Mathura in 1669 to protect it from Aurangzeb's (See History: Dynasties) destructive impulses. The story goes that when an attempt was made later to shift out the image from this place, the wagon which was to carry it sank to the ground, thus indicating that the idol preferred to stay on in the place.

OMKARESHWAR

An island in the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh, it was the site of one of the 12

jyotirlingas (Shiva temples) destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni on his march to Somnath in 1024. Some traces of the splendid construction still remain. The whole island is the abode of Shiva but the river bank has a number of Vishnu and Jain temples.

PADMANABHASWAMY

Vishnu temple that houses the presiding deity of Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala). It was constructed by the Maharaja of Travancore in the Dravidian style in 1733 (See Myths and Legends).

PALANI

Hill temple in Tamil Nadu dedicated to Murugan (Kartikeya, one of the two sons of Shiva). The deity is also referred to as Palani Andavan and is a popular pilgrimage centre where tonsuring (as in Tirupati) is carried out on a mass scale. Palani is regarded as one of the six important houses of Murugan; *Aaru Padai Veedu Andavan* (Lord of six houses). The other five are Maruthamalai, Swamimalai, Thiruparamkundram, Thiruchendur and Thiruttani. Thiruchendur is a fine temple by the sea while Thiruttani is another centre for the ritual tonsuring of devotees.

PANDHARPUR

An ancient and popular pilgrimage spot on the bank of the river Bhima in Maharashtra. The presiding deity is the Vaishnava deity Vitthala. This is a seat of the Bhakti cult in the state.

The story goes that Pundalik, a Brahmin, went on a pilgrimage with his wife on a mule and his old parents trudging all the way. At Pandharpur he rested for a night at the home of a pious Brahmin, who venerated and showered affection on his parents who lived with him. He also saw three richly-dressed women doing the menial work around the house. He learnt they were actually Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, the goddesses of the three great rivers who had volunteered to work for such a good son who so worshipped his parents. Pundalik was ashamed of his own negligence. He decided to make amends and settled in Pandharpur. Once when he was serving his parents, Krishna, to test him, called out from the door. Pundalik threw a brick at him, without looking and asked him to sit and wait till he finished serving his parents. The God was pleased and left his image on the brick which the temple enshrines. Later the deified saint was believed to be a Krishna incarnation himself. Devotees today identify themselves with the Vithoba stone as a mark of complete surrender.



Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Tiruvananthapuram

PANCHA PRAYAGA

These are the five river confluences of the Himalayas which are considered very pious. They are Devaprayaga (Alakananda and Bhagirathi), Karnaprayaga (Alakananda and Pindara), Rudraprayaga (Alakananda and Mandakini), Nandaprayaga (Alakananda and Nanda) and Vishnuprayaga (Alakananda and Vishnuganga. See Nature: Rivers).

PANCHA TIRTHA

Five holy towns, Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Gaya, Ganga and Prabhas are together known as Pancha Tirtha. In addition there are five ponds which are also considered very holy – Manas, Pushkar, Bindu Narayana and Pampa.

PARTHASARATHI

This temple at Triplicane in Madras is dedicated to Krishna the Parthasarathi or the charioteer to Arjuna (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata) in which role he propounded the *Bhagavad Gita* (See Hinduism).

RAMESWARAM

Rama is believed to have camped here with his followers before he crossed the southern tip to Sri Lanka to rescue Sita (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana). The temple dedicated to Shiva (with a Shivalinga) is believed to have been built by Rama himself and is a fine specimen of Dravidian architecture. Hanuman also installed a linga before the temple, and to please his devotee, Rama is said to have stipulated that all pilgrims should first worship the linga outside before worshipping the one inside. People have great faith in 'Sethu snanam' (bath by the 'bridge' to Lanka) in this place, especially childless couples, who believe their prayer will be answered (See Myths and Legends).

RISHIKESH

A temple city at the foot of the Himalayas on the bank of the river Ganga in Uttar Pradesh. There are several ashramas (hermitages) along the river and a well-known suspension bridge called Lakshman Jhoola over the Ganga.

ROCK FORT TEMPLE

Set on a massive rock at a height of 63 m in Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, it is accessed by 437 steps cut into a tunnel through the rock. The temple houses the deity Sri Thayumanaswamy (the god who is also a mother) as Shiva is known here.

SABARIMALAI

A famous pilgrim centre, this temple situated on a hill in Kerala is the abode of Ayyapan also known as Hariharaputra, the

son of Vishnu and Shiva (See Performing Arts: Dance – Mohiniattam). A visit to this temple is traditionally preceded by severe austerities and penance.

SEVEN CITIES

Religious literature cites seven important cities. According to *Garuda Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism, *Puranas*) they are Ayodhya, Mathura, Gaya, Kashi, Kanchi, Avantika and Dwaraka.

The *Puranas* name four cities as Dhams or seats of the Shankaracharya situated in four corners of the country – Badrinath in the north, Jagannath Puri in the east, Dwaraka in the west and Rameswaram in the south (See Temples).

SUCHINDRAM

Close to Kanyakumari (at the southernmost tip) the temple has some of the most marvellously carved pillars (See Archaeology/Architecture).

SRI CHAMUNDESWARI

A thousand-odd steps lead up to this temple on Chamundi Hill in Mysore. A little before the temple is the famous Nandi (bull), 5 m high and carved out of a single rock.

SRI CHENNAKESHWARA

Built around 1260 AD by the Hoysala kings (See History: Dynasties) this star-shaped temple at Somnathpur, 45 km east of Mysore, is architecturally one of the most beautiful buildings. The walls are covered with sculptures depicting scenes from the great epics, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad Gita* and the lives and times of the Hoysala kings. No two friezes are said to be alike. The temples at Belur and Halebid are also excellent examples of Hoysala architecture (See Archaeology/Architecture; Religion: Hinduism – Epics; Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

SHRI MANGESH

Situated close to Ponda in Goa, the tiny temple with a white tower is dedicated to Shiva. Close by is the Shri Mahalsa, a Vishnu temple.

SHRI SHANTADURGA TEMPLE

Dedicated to Shantadurga the goddess of peace, this temple near Ponda in Goa has a pagoda-like tower in the compound.

SOMNATH

Somnath Patan in Gujarat is well-known for its chequered history. Said to have been built by Somraj (the moon god) himself, originally in gold, the temple was so wealthy that it had 300 musicians, 500 dancers and 300 barbers (to shave heads of pilgrims). It attracted the attention of

Mahmud of Ghazni (1024) who plundered its riches and razed the temple to the ground. Each time thereafter it was rebuilt only to be destroyed again and again, finally by Aurangzeb (See History: Dynasties) in 1706. Hardly anything of the original temple remains now. Still it remains one of the 12 holy jyotirlingas – Shiva's shrines (See Myths and Legends).

SRI RANGANATHASWAMY

At Srirangam in Tamil Nadu, this is the largest temple complex in the country. It has seven concentric walls and 21 gopurams and the entire city is within these walls. The bulk of construction dates back to 14th to 17th centuries and the Cheras, Pandyas, Cholas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagar kings have all had a hand in its building (See History: Dynasties). Though mainly dedicated to Vishnu, there are shrines to various other gods.

SWAMI NARAYAN TEMPLE

Located in the old part of Ahmedabad (Gujarat), this brightly-painted temple dates back to 1850. To the south of the temple area are nine tombs known as the Nau Gaz Pir or the 'nine yard saints.'

TIRUKAZHUKUNDRAM

Famous as a pilgrimage centre in Tamil Nadu because of the two kites (kazhugu in Tamil) that come every day at a particular time to be fed by the priest. Legend has it that they come all the way from Varanasi each day and are actually two sages undergoing a long penance.

TIRUPATI VENKATESWARA

Situated atop the last of seven hills (Tirumala) in Andhra Pradesh, this temple dedicated to Venkateswara (Balaji) is the richest temple in the country. The legend goes that Vishnu charmed by the Sesha-sailam hills sat down to meditate and after a while his body turned into stone. A cowherd discovered this and informed the king who built a temple around the stone idol. Tonsuring is a well-known act of dedication here (See Myths and Legends).

TIRUVAIYARU

Close to Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu, this famous temple is dedicated to Pancha-Natheswara, as Shiva is known here. Every year in January an eight day music festival in honour of the saint composer Thyagaraja (See Performing Arts: Music) is held here when well-known musicians gather to pay homage to the composer.

TIRUVANNAMALAI

Of the hundred or more temples in this town in Tamil Nadu, the Arunachaleswar (Shiva-Parvati) temple is said to be the lar-



Worship at Triveni Sangam

gest Shiva temple in India. The main gopuram is 66 m high and there is a 1,000 pillared hall. Saint Ramana Maharishi received his enlightenment here and subsequently made it his home (See Sages and Saints).

TRICHUR

Famous for the Vadakanatha and other temples. The place is also known for the annual, colourful festival, Pooram (See Festivals).

TRINETRESWARA

Lit. the three-eyed god. This Shiva temple at Tarnetar village in Surendranagar district of Gujarat is reflected in a kund (tank) and is a splendid example of Sompura architecture of the 14th century. Draupadi's swayamvara is believed to have taken place at this site following Arjuna's triumphant Matsyavedh (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata).

TRIVENI

In the confluence of the three most pious rivers of India – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati – Prayaga in UP is called Tirtharaj or the king among holy places.

TULSI MANAS

This is close to the Durga temple in Varanasi. Built in 1964, the walls have verses and scenes from Tulsidas's *Ram Charit Manas*, the Hindi version of the *Ramayana*, inscribed on them (See Literature: Hindi).

TWELVE JYOTIRLINGAS

In the *Shiva Purana* and *Nandi Upa-Purana* Shiva is said to declare that he is omnipresent but especially manifest in 12 forms and places: In Somnath; in Srisailem as Mallikarjuna; in Ujjain as Amareshwara and Mahakaleshwara; as Omkareshwar by the Narmada; as Vaidyanatha in Deogarh;

as Bhimashankar in Dakini; as Vishwanatha in Kashi; in Rameshwaram as Ramanatha; as Triambakeshwar by the Gomati; as Gautamesha and as Kedarnath in the Himalayas (See Myths and Legends).

VAIKUNTAPERUMAL

Dedicated to Vishnu, this temple in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, was built between 674 and 800 by Parameshwara and Nandi Varman II shortly after the Kailasa-natha temple. The lion pillars represent the first phase in the evolution of the magnificent thousand-pillared halls of later temples.

VAISHNO DEVI

A popular pilgrimage place. The Devi is believed to be a 'swayambhu' (appeared naturally from the ground) and thousands undertake the ascent to the temple each day chanting 'Jai Mata Di' for the goddess is said to grant all desires of devotees.

VANA JATRA (YATRA)

Pilgrimage to various places in the Braj region associated with Krishna's life. The route extends to over 84 km and is completed in 40 days. The jatra moves from Mathura and after camping at various places (where plays and other shows based on the life of Krishna are staged) the group returns to Mathura after Janmashtami, Krishna's birthday (See Festivals; Religion: Hinduism).

VARADARAJAPERUMAL

Located in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, this is another gigantic monument dedicated to Vishnu. There is a hundred-pillared hall and a huge monolithic chain. It was built by the Vijayanagara kings (See History: Dynasties).

VARANASI

Situated on the banks of the Ganga in UP, it is also known as Kashi and is perhaps the greatest pilgrimage centre in the country. The city finds frequent mention in ancient Indian literature. Buddha delivered his first sermon at Saranath near Kashi. Jain Tirthankaras Parsvanatha and Suparsvanatha were born here. Those who die in this temple city of Shiva (See Kashi Vishwanath; Myths and Legends; Religion: Hinduism-Samskara) are considered most fortunate.

VISHNUPAD

Situated in a most crowded part of Gaya in Bihar, this temple was built in 1787 by Queen Ahalya Bai of Indore. A 30 m high octagonal tower surmounts the temple. Inside, a 40 cm long 'foot print' of Vishnu surrounded by a silver-plated basin is imprinted in solid rock.



LAW

Neeti

**India has one of the finest
legal systems in the world and legal concepts
date back to the law givers
of Vedic times.**

**Nuances of custom
and usage, differing personal laws of
various religions and the Indian Penal Code
have a great bearing on several
accepted legal practices**

The first known codification of laws was under the Gupta dynasty (335-445 AD; See History: Dynasties) when civil and criminal laws were clearly demarcated. On the wrong side of the law, the earliest recorded patricide is the death of the Mauryan King Bimbisara, at the hands of his son Ajatashatru, in 494 BC.

The complex web of law is underpinned by the democratic Constitution of India that upholds equality, the sacred fundamental rights of each citizen and justice for all.

The Supreme Court of India (Sarvachha Nyayalaya) atop the High Courts and district courts is the final legal authority. The primary arbiter in the village (the smallest civic unit) is the Panchayat, headed by a sarpanch. This is an old institution of a minimum of five elected villagers.

The following terms are part of the Indian legal system.

AADHA AND URDHA

Property with the grant of all contained below the surface as well as above or on it.

ABADKARI

The right to land derived from the first clearing away and occupying of it. From the Hindustani expression 'abad-kan' meaning to populate or settle.

ACHANDRAKRAM

Sanskrit. Lit. 'A' means so long as; Chandra is moon; Akra is sun. As long as the sun and moon endure. A perpetual tenure.

ACHAN

Malayalam. Father, lord. The title of royal males in Palghat. The minister of the former raja of Kozhikode was the 'mangat achan' and the minister of the second or junior Raja of Kozhikode was 'cheruli achan.'

ACHARAM

In Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu and the Dakshina and Uttar Kannada districts of Karnataka, the term applies to perpetual, hereditary proprietorship. In a general sense, it means 'established custom and usage' as opposed to anacharam.

ADHARAM

Malayalam. Prop or support; canal or dyke; document, voucher, title deed by which property right is established.

ADILAL, RAHN

In Muslim law, the third party to whose keeping a pledge or security given by a borrower to a lender is entrusted.

ADINA

Malayalam. Mortgage of land for a sum less than its value by a superior to a person of lower caste. Can also mean a land grant from a 'superior' to an 'inferior,' rent free.

ADIPPUKULI

Tamil. Wages for threshing corn.

ADITYA

Hindustani. A mercantile correspondent or agent.

AGRAHARA

Land granted to Brahmins either rent-free or at a low rate. In south India, a street or quarter occupied by Brahmins.

AGYA

Hindustani. An order, edict, award, decree.

AINTHUGAI

Tamil. Account of the properties of a person (may include properties held in trust) among the Nattukotai Chettiers of Tamil Nadu.

AJIVAD VIBHAGA

Sanskrit. Partition after the father's death.

AKAR

Legal term denoting immovable property.

AKRIL

In Muslim law, a marriage portion or dowry.

AMAL

Broad legal term. Business affairs, an office, collection of revenues, administration of justice, management of land or business on behalf of another. In Maratha finances, an item or head of collection; the share or portion of the revenue after the expenses and extra charges have been defrayed.

AMAL DASTAK

Deed of conveyance; any document giving possession of property. Warrant or authority to collect the rents of an estate. A written order from the proper authority to enable the purchaser of an estate at a public sale to obtain possession of it. Not a lease creating tenancy right.

AMALNAMA

The authority to manage or administer any

property. An order for possession, a warrant from a competent public functionary to an individual authorising his taking possession and management of landed or other property. Before the abolition of Zamindari (See Zamindari), it was an order from a zamindar to his cultivators to give possession to a renter.

AMANAT

Deposit, charge, anything held in trust.

AMANI TALO

Karnataka. An unrented tank or reservoir of water, not belonging exclusively to any one village, under the superintendence of government officers.

AMBALAPPADI

Malayalam. Lit. temple step, a seat of honour. A certain step or degree in a temple to which only particular persons are entitled. The claim is derived from ancestry but the dignity is saleable. Traditionally, it is sold only to a priest with a socially respectable background.

AMR-BA-YAD

In Muslim law, a form of divorce. If a man says to his wife, "Your business is in your own hands," and the woman assents, an irreversible divorce takes place (See Talak).

ANATHEE

Lit. 'having no Lord'; old wasteland that has remained uncultivated within memory. Orphaned.

ANAVADHAJA

A streedhan gift subsequent to marriage (See Streedhan).

ANN SANTATHI

Male issue (and not male descendants). Unless excluded by the context, an adopted son is included in the expression.

ANSAPATRA

A deed setting forth the shares or portions of a property. A deed of partition between the members of a Hindu family.

ANUMATI PATRA

Lit. letter of permission. A deed of assent or concurrence; especially a deed executed by a husband about to die, authorizing his widow to adopt a son.

ANVADEYA

One of the kinds of 'streedhan'; what is presented to a woman by her husband's family after marriage.

ANYONA VIBHAGA

Mutual partition by shareholders without the presence of any other persons.

APARATAM

Sanskrit. Fault, offence. Apradh (Hindi), abaratam (Tamil).

APRATIBANDHA

Unobstructed inheritance—when property descends from father to son or grandfather to grandson. Property in which a person acquires right by birth is called aprati-bandhadaya in the Mitakshara school of law (See Mitakshara).

APUTRASYA

Lit. sonless. In law it means one who has left no son, grandson or great grandson in the male line.

ARCHAKA

Derived from Sanskrit 'archa' meaning idol. A priest who alone is allowed to personally attend upon the idol. His duties are those of offering worship in the temple on behalf of the community (See Religion: Hinduism).

ARI JANAN

Malayalam. A form of perpetual grant for services in a temple by which the tenant binds himself to take a fixed quantity of rice daily to a temple, which is cooked by the priest, offered to the deity and afterwards returned to the tenant.

ARZI

A petition, an address, a respectful statement or representation whether oral or written.

ASAMI

A cultivator, tenant, renter, a non-proprietary cultivator; also a dependant. A debtor, culprit, criminal or defendant in a civil or criminal action.

ASTHAN

Lit. placeless. An institution of ascetics or sanyasins having no worldly connections of wealth and family.

AUL, AAL

In Muslim law, a distribution of that fractional portion of inherited property that is more than the amount of shares of legal heirs.

AURASA

A maternal brother or son of the same mother (born of the same womb).

AVIBHAKTA KUTUMBAM

Sanskrit. Lit. undivided family; avibhakta from vibhaj: to divide (See Hindu Undivided Family—HUF).

BAHI KHATA

Shopkeeper's ledger of revenue.

BAHI, WAHI

A stitched book for accounts, of which several are kept by traditional bankers or merchants.

BAI BIL Wafa

Deed of a conditional sale. Or an out-and-out sale with a repurchase clause.

BAI MUKAYAZA

Sale or barter of goods by a husband in liquidation of dower due to a wife.

BAINANA

A certificate of sale granted by the court after confirmation of the sale.

BANDOBAST

Hindustani. A settlement of the amount of revenue to be paid or collected. A well-known textbook example is 'Todarmal's Bandobast,' about the efficient and far-seeing land revenue system organized by Raja Todarmal at the behest of Akbar the Mughal. In lay terms, bandobast means arrangement (See History: Dynasties).

BANJAR

Hindustani. Waste or fallow land.

BASTI

Hindustani. An area under a city's municipality where huts are built and the tenant of the land becomes the owner of the hut. Usually a slum area or a shanty town that springs up with fresh inflows of migrant labour from rural areas to the city.

BATAI

Hindustani. A division of crop between the cultivator and the landlord or the government in that capacity; rent taken by division of produce.

BAYANA

Earnest money or deposit.

BENAMI

Hindustani. Lit. nameless; fictitious, fraudulent, as in a purchase under a false name, a sale or purchase made in the name of someone other than the actual vendor or purchaser. The one in whose name it is transacted is thus the benamdar. A common practice in India, the 'benami transaction' has been in vogue for centuries—used originally to circumvent laws on zamindari, and later, ceiling on land holdings, or shares in a business. This practice resembles the doctrine of English law that the trust of the legal estate results to the man who pays the purchase money.

BEOHARI

Hindustani. Vyapari, behari (Kannada), a trader, man of business, merchant, money-lender, creditor, a litigant, one who

engages in legal proceedings.

BERUNI

Hindustani. The opposite of khandani or well-born, of high status. Among Muslims calling a woman 'beruni' meant simply that she was of a lower tribe and lower status.

'BESIDES PERAMBOKE'

Land required for communal use vested in the government as trustees for the public except for burning and burial grounds.

BHAI BHATIJA HAKIKI

Hindustani. Lit. brother-~nephew-~ rights. A sister is included in this term to describe true siblings, often called 'own' brothers and sisters (See People: Kinship).

BHAMAH WAJAH

Hindustani. 'With all rights.'

BHANDARI

Hindustani, Marathi. A treasury or store. In Gujarat, a kind of guarantee or assurance to a creditor about repayment of a loan. Also a guarantee to a person of the undisturbed enjoyment of recognised office or property granted by the former British government to creditors and officers of the Gaekwads, former rulers of Baroda.

BHINNA-GOTRA-SAPINDA

Those related through a female. Also known as bandhu who may be either atma bandhus (own relations), pitri bandhus or mahi bandhus (with common ancestors to a certain degree).

BHOGUM

Hindustani. Enjoyment, possession.

BHOGYA BANDHAK

Hindustani. A kind of mortgage in which a pledged article may be sold and its profit taken in lieu of interest.

BHRATRUDATTA

Lit. 'given by a brother.' A form of streedhan or woman's wealth (See Streedhan). Given by a brother to a sister on her marriage.

BHUMI

Hindustani. Soil. The commonest cause of litigation in India. Bhumiya is a landholder, tenant farmer or cultivator. Bhumiyas are 'lords of the soil.'

BHUMIYAR

The original (Dravidian) families who founded the village, had special privileged holdings and furnished the village hereditary officers—a term found in central Indian tribal areas such as Chota Nagpur.

BIGHA

Hindustani. A measure of land, with varying measures across India. A standard

Mughal area measure. In upper India (north of Madhya Pradesh), it is usually 3025 sq yds; in Bengal, it is 1650 sq yds. A bighadam is a village tenure (also called Bheriachara) in which the holding includes small portions of different kinds of soil.

BIJAI

Hindustani. A portion of seed corn which the poor are allowed to take from the field; also the portions of corn given to the village smith, barber, carpenter and washerman by each cultivator.

BOHNI

Hindi, Telugu, Kannada. The first money received during the day or the first ready money sale by shopkeepers. As a rule, no credit is given for the article first sold.

DACOITY

A holdup, with robbery as intent and threat of harm as a means of extortion. Detailed at length in Section 391 of the Indian Penal Code, Act 45 of 1860.

DAFTAR

Persian. A record, a register, the whole body of papers pertaining to an office. As we know today, the office or place of work or the room(s) where paperwork is handled.

DAKHALAPALLI

Telugu. A small village within the limits of a larger village.

DAKHIL

Hindustani. Entrance, taking possession, entry of an item in a deed or register, a receipt for money, annexation of lands, inclusion of a minor in a major parcel of land. Admission to a hospital or enrolment in an educational institution.

DAMDUPAT

Sanskrit. Also dandupat. The Hindu rule that no greater arrear of interest can be recovered at any one time than what will amount to the principal sum. It operates independantly of legislative enactment as part of the Hindu law of contract.

DANDIDARI

Lit. a measurer, meaning a broker who negotiates the buying and selling of grain in the market-place for a commission. Dandikala means harvest time.

DANG

Hindustani. A wooden staff, physically the same as a 'lathi,' but classified as a deadly weapon (See History: Weapons).

DAR-UL-HARB

Arabic. A country under non-Muslim rule, as opposed to Dar-ul-Islam, a Muslim

government.

DARGAH

Persian. A royal court. In India it usually means the shrine or tomb of an Islamic holy man and the focus of pilgrimage. It is a legally recognised religious institution with property and the maintenance of facilities for pilgrims. One of the best-known Dargahs in India is at Ajmer Sharif, the tomb of the Sufi saint Moinuddin Chisti (See Holy Places; Sages and Saints).

DARKHAST

Hindustani. An application, a proposal, especially an application to court, different from filing a suit such as an application for the execution of a decree or assignment of government land. In Madras, the term applies to all requests for transfer and relinquishment or for revenue petitions.

DAROGA

Persian. A manager, a superintendent, an overseer, particularly the head of a custom or excise station or a distillery.

DAST-BA-DAST

Ready money transaction.

DASTAK

Hindustani. Writ of demand for payment of land revenue. In non-legal terminology, it signifies a knock, as at the door.

DASTAVEZ

Voucher, document, any legal paper, note-of-hand, bond or title deed. Anything in writing that could be produced in evidence or by which a person may be bound in law. Certificate of any kind.

DASTURI

Customary fee, commission, prerequisite.

DATTAKA CHANDRIKA

An anonymous legal work of uncertain date whose authority was accepted centuries ago in south India on matters of adoption. Another work, *Dattaka Mimamsa*, (c. 17th century) by Nanda Pandita is also accepted as authoritative by courts of law since the British Raj.

DAYABHAGA

A digest of Hindu law, particularly of inheritance, written by an ancient Indian scholar Jimutavahana (lit. 'whose vehicle is the clouds,' a name for the storm god Indra; See Hinduism: Vedic Gods). A work of paramount authority in Bengal (See Mitakshara).

DES

Hindustani. A district (nad in Malayalam). Under the old Hindu (Vedic) system a desadhi-kari was the term for a headman.

DESAI/DESMUKH

The same as a Desmukh, the headman of a 'des' or district in a Hindu kingdom. The term Desai is often found as a surname in Gujarat and Deshmukh in Maharashtra. Later Deshmukh came to mean a government revenue collector.

DESHPANDE

Telugu. Now a common surname in Maharashtra, it denoted the hereditary revenue accountant of a district or a number of villages.

DEVADASI

Lit. servant of god, a woman dedicated to a temple and considered married to god, a practice prevalent in south India. Now banned. (See Performing Arts: Dance – Bharata Natyam; Religion: Hinduism – Concepts).

DEVADAYAM

Sanskrit. 'What is due to the gods,' grants of lands to temples or for religious purposes.

DEVAMATRIKA

Marathi. Devamatruka (Telugu). Watered by rain; fields, lands, as opposed to those dependant on artificial irrigation.

DEVARAKADU

Coorg. A sacred grove.

DEVASTHAN

Land granted for support of a temple. The best instance is the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam Trust, the body that manages the assets of India's richest temple (See Myths and Legends).

DEWAN

Place of assembly, as the Dewan-i-am, the public hall of audience of the Mughals at Agra and Delhi. Dewan, in British India, meant a revenue servant. The Dewani or Dewanny Court of Adawlut, under the British continued an ancient court tradition for trying revenue and other civil cases.

DHAR

Punjabi. The total reckoning of the grain before it is divided between various points. Dhardhari means fluid, faction or party spirit, especially used in the northern villages of the Punjab.

DHARAM

Sanskrit, Hindustani. Law, virtue, legal or moral duty. In gifts of property by a Hindu, it means certain classes of pious gifts called Ishta and Poorta.

DHARAMSHALA

A place where a wayfarer has a right of residence without payment. These abound in India, supported by private and

public donations, especially at places of pilgrimage. A public boarding house is not a dharamsala.

DHARMA

Sanskrit. Characterised by right conduct, prescribed in the *Vedas* and *Smritis* and the conduct of the good (See Philosophy; Religion: Hinduism – Concepts).

DHARNA

Hindustani. To sit in protest at the door of a house or building to enforce a promise, debt or redemption of a perceived wrong by the resident or occupant within. The person (or people) who sits in dharna neither eats nor drinks. This practice is made an offence by the penal law of India but is often resorted to by the public.

DIWAN

Persian. A royal court, a council of state, tribal of revenue or justice. A minister, a chief officer of state, an honorary title, civil officer of a district under the later Muslim administration.

DIWANI

The civil administration, officer of Diwan, as opposed to the Nizamat or Fauzdari, the military and criminal administration – civil as opposed to criminal (See Diwan).

DIYAT

Arabic. The law of retaliation, an expiatory penalty or fine for murder.

DUBBASH

Lit. two languages, or one who speaks two languages, an interpreter, a broker. The Hindu, who at Madras in the days of the East India Company (See History), managed the money concerns of the European and served as his confidential agent in his private and public transactions with the local people.

DVYAMUSHANA

A form of adoption, to constitute which there must be a special agreement between two fathers (real and adoptive) to that effect. The consequences of this form of adoption are different from an ordinary adoption, in that the children of the adopted son(s) would revert to their natural family. Hence the adoptive father fails to perpetuate his line.

FARAIZ

Arabic. The legal knowledge of dividing inheritance, according to Muslim law.

FARASH

Arabic. A servant whose duty it is to spread carpets, now usually the person who sweeps the office.

FADNAVIS

Also Phadnavis. Lit. writer of lists and schedules, a financial secretary in old Maratha states, the best known being Nana Phadnavis, major figure in the Revolt of 1857 (See History).

FASLI

Hindustani. The harvest year; of or belonging to a harvest.

FATWA

Arabic. A collection or digest of judicial decisions. The best known is the *Fatwa-i-Alamgiri*, compiled by the order of Aurangzeb the Mughal, commenced in Hijri 1607 (AD 1656). It contains a vast number of recitals of law cases, though without any arguments or proofs, which have to be drawn from the *Hidayah* and other works (See Hidayah).

FAUJDAR

A police magistrate in Mughal times in authority over a large district and is also a receiver-general of revenues. Faujdari was the term for his office and jurisdiction, while Faujdari Awab was an assessment of territory and revenue made by a Faujdar.

GADDI

Telugu. Grass or straw. A pillow, used as a throne (Hindi) and the common term for throne; a class of Muslim milkmen in Delhi, Karnal and Ambala; also a pastoral hill community.

GAMETI

A former designation for a petty chief in Maharashtra.

GARHIBAND

Hindustani. Lit. 'fortbound.' The name of a tenure in Bundelkhand, so called from the practice of Thakurs shutting themselves up in their garhis to resist the government demand of revenue. In this way they secured very favourable terms both from the Mughal and Maratha governments. (In modern India, the ruler of a former princely state in Rajasthan, attempted a similar tactic, with unhappy results: his water and electricity were cut!).

GAUDA, GOWDA

A community of agriculturalists in Karnataka similar to the Jats in north India. 'Gauda-manyam' was the privileged land and fees of the village headman.

GHAZI

Arabic. One who takes part in 'Ghazu' which originally meant a plundering raid, but in the time of the prophet Mohammed came to mean an expedition against non-Muslims.

GHULAM

Arabic. The son of a female slave; a slave. The word is often used to form a Muslim name such as Ghulam Ali, the slave of Ali.

GONCHALU

Karnataka. A man set to watch a field.

GRAMA(M)

Sanskrit. Village, a term recognised across most of India, spawning a number of terms associated with village functions and rights. A headman, for instance, is variously called a 'gramadhikari,' 'gramadhipati,' 'gramani.' A village accountant is a 'gramalekhak' or patwari, 'gramakanakan' or 'gramakarnam.' The term for battle, sangram, literally means 'the meeting of villages' – so fierce and bloody were the encounters between Aryan settlers searching for water and grazing lands for their cattle.

GUDHAJA

Hindu Law. A son secretly born in the husband's house, a son of hidden origin as opposed to the Hindu practice of a woman going to her parents' house for each delivery.

GUMASTA

An agent or clerk in law or business.

GYANI

Legally, a person too wise to worship idols.

GYMKHANA

A public place for display of athletics, a peculiarly Anglo-Indian term.

HAAT

A weekly market on stated days in central and northern India. Also a daily bazaar called 'mandi' in some northern areas.

HABIB-NUKSAN

Arabic. In Muslim law, the partial exclusion or substitution of a share in inheritance. Where there are no children, a wife has a fourth share but where there are any, only an eighth.

HAD

Boundary, limit. A common Hindi phrase of exasperation meaning, "This is the limit!" is "*Had ho gayee!*" In legalese, it applies to land, as in the Telugu 'Haddupatrika,' a statement of boundaries or 'Hadd-sikandri' which means the deep stream or main flowing channel of a river that forms the boundary for estates on opposite banks called daryabanna.

HAFTA

Hindustani. Weekly protection money, extorted by local gangs and corrupt law enforcers. From saptam or seventh, or every seventh day.

HAJAM AYA JODI

Kannada. Tax once levied on the land assigned to the village barber.

HAJIR

Arabic. In Muslim law, annulment or disqualification. The invalidity of acts done by someone who is under age, mentally unsound or is a slave or dependant.

HAKDAR

One who holds a hak (right) or is entitled to a share.

HAKIMALI

A grant for the support of younger sons or of a raja's relatives, or a lord.

HALAKAT

Hindustani. Homicide.

HALDAR

A tax-collector. But Haldari specifically meant a tax on marriages.

HALI

A ploughman. Can also mean a bondsman who must labour in payment of a debt until its discharge.

HAMESHA

Hindustani. 'Always' or 'forever.' In a will, an award or court order does not always mean perpetual interest to the beneficiary but with sufficient evidence, it can.

HANAFI

Also Hanafi, the first of four Sunni schools founded by Abu Hanifa (See Religion: Islam). Most of the Sunnis of northern and western India are of this school as are the Turks. It is the most conservative and permits no modification of the old doctrine.

HAQ-ZAMINDARI

The overlord's dues from subordinates.

HAQIYAT

Rights in immovable property, usually land, but can also mean house property.

HAVELI

Palace, mansion. Haveli-lands are crown lands, or those once reserved for the supply of privy purses to the former ruling classes.

HAWALA

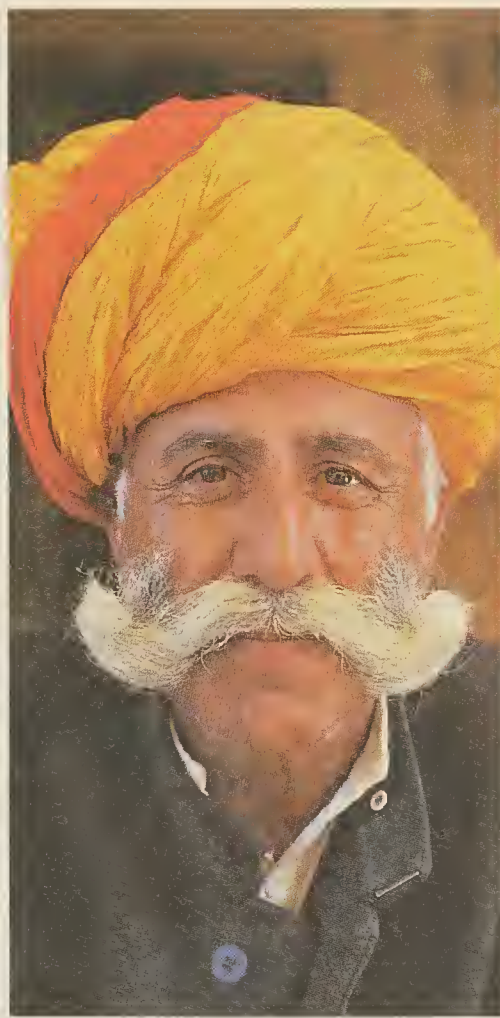
A tenure, connected with waste reclamation. Has sub-tenures like 'nim-hawala,' 'ausat-nim-hawala.'

HAWALDAR

A junior rank in the police, like a constable.

HAZIRI

Presence, a muster-roll. Also chota haziri, the Hindustani term for breakfast in common usage.



Hawalдар of a royal family

HIBA

A gift in law, a perfect gift, one accompanied by delivery and acceptance.

HIBA-BIL-IWUZ

An exchange gift, as when a man gives his property to his wife in exchange for her claim of dower. A Hibadar is the receiver and a Hiba-naniah, the deed of gift.

HIDAD

Arabic. Mourning. In Muslim law, the mourning of a widow for her husband, total abstinence from the use of perfumes or ornaments (See Iddat).

HIDAYAH

A well-known law commentary by Sheikh Burhanuddin Ali, son of Abu Bakr. Its general arrangement and conclusions are taken from the *Jama-i-Sughir* by Imam Mohammed. It is valued highly by Islamic scholars for its selection of law cases and the proofs and arguments given to determine them. It is still esteemed and is the subject of many commentaries.

HINDU

Legally, the term includes not only those who are Hindu by religion, ie, 'practising' Hindus but also those who are commonly

known as such (See Religion: Hinduism).

HINDU LAW

Administered by courts for those communities who define their caste status in relation to the *Shastras*. Not the general law of India, but a system of personal law administered to certain castes, classes and families.

HINDU LAW, RULES OF USAGE

Jaimini's rules for interpretation of Hindu law texts:

- Obligatory and non-obligatory texts must be distinguished. For example, *Vedas* are law, the *Puranas* are not.
- Established and approved usage has the force of law without questioning the cause of its existence.
- Foreign words must be understood in the context of their own language before they are used.
- Every word and sentence must have a meaning and a purpose.
- Say things clearly and simply: don't complicate the meaning with confusing words.
- No word or sentence should be ambiguous at any one point.
- All words must be understood to have their basic meaning.
- Contradictions must be reconciled. The law favours the construction which is kindlier.
- When contradictions are inevitable, one has the option of adopting any construction.
- All constructions must be contextual.
- All words must be given their natural meaning, unless the context justifies their use as terms of art.
- Where two *Shastras* in the same code lay down different rules, the newer rules supercede the older ones.
- No rule is enforceable unless it conforms to current custom.
- A judicial rule (the rule of general law) supercedes the Shastric rule.
- The legislature is supreme and it can make or unmake laws.
- In the event of a conflict between ancient texts and modern commentaries, the latter should always be preferred.

HINDU LAW, SOURCES

Derived from four sources, the *Vedas* or Shruti (See Philosophy); the sacred traditions of early law givers or Smriti; the customs of virtuous men and one's own inclination to conform to social rules and what is defined as good conduct. The first two are regarded as absolute authorities (See Religion: Hinduism).

HINDU UNDIVIDED FAMILY (HUF)

All persons lineally descended from a common ancestor; includes wives and unmarried daughters. Treated as a single unit or 'joint family' for purposes of taxation. Its head or representative is called a 'karta' or doer (See Avibhakta Kutumbam).

HINDUSTAN

India. Also a term applied to north India. The language of Hindustan (Hindi mixed with Urdu) is Hindustani.

HIRANYAKESIN

A Hindu sage of ancient times, the writer of an important Smriti.

HISAB-I-BATAI

Accounts kept by village accountants of the exact portions of the land belonging to the government and the village.

HOLOGRAPHIC WILL

One that is entirely written, dated and signed by the hand of the testator himself.

HORASWASTI

Kannada. Private land held by temples in Karnataka as their own property.

HOUSES, MALABAR

In Kerala, dwellings are named differently, according to caste:

Mana – Namboodiripad (chief priest)

Illam – Namboodiris (Brahmins)

Kovilakkam or Kottaram (rajas)

Idam or Kuttala, Naduvalis (nobles)

Vidu – Nairs (Kshatriyas)

Pushpottu, Pisharam, Varyam – Houses of 'Ambala Vasai' or servants of the temple expressing their caste.

Varyam – Chakyars (Kathakali artists)

Matham – Chaliars (weavers)

Kudi – Mapillas (the Moplah Muslims)

Pidika – Houses of other castes.

IBRA-NAMA

A written relinquishment of claim or acquittance.

IDDAT

In Muslim law, the period of mourning kept by 'a free woman married by a valid contract,' when her husband dies. It is normally four months and 10 days. If she is pregnant, she must observe it till delivery if the four months and 10 days are covered during her pregnancy. If she delivers before this time is up, she must wait for its completion (See Religion: Islam).

IHSAN

Arabic. In Muslim law, a sane, free, adult Muslim of good reputation who is therefore entitled to demand punishment for adultery committed against him or her.

IJAB

Arabic. A verbal offer. Ijab-i-Qabool (Persian) is the acceptance of a verbal gift.

IJARA-NAMA

Hindustani. A lease, any document under which a farm is held.

IJAZAT-NAMA

Hindustani. Any written order or permission; also the Muslim term for the Anumati Patra of Hindu law, or the written permission of a husband to his wife to adopt a son after his death.

IKRAH

Arabic. Homicide by compulsion.

IKRAR

Hindustani. Usually interpreted as 'agreement,' but an ambiguous word. An 'Ikrar-nama' is a deed of assent in general, while an 'Ikrar-nama-salesi' is a deed of arbitration.

ILAH

Hindustani. Divine. The title of an era instituted by Akbar the Mughal, starting with the first year of his reign, Hijra 963, (1556) and made obsolete sometime after his reign (See History: Dynasties).

ILAKA/ILAGA

Hindustani. A property, estate, district, jurisdiction or a claim, right, title department or office.

ILLAM

Malayalam. An ordinary house in Malabar; the Illam or Mana of Namboodiri Brahmins corresponds to the Tarwad (ancestral property) of the dominant Nayars (Kshatriya or warrior caste).

ILLATOM/ ADOPTION

The adoption of a son-in-law as a son, which is opposed to the strict rules of Hindu law, but nevertheless has been recognised as valid by centuries-old custom. This practice is rooted in certain areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, like Bellary, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Nellore, North and South Arcot, especially among the Reddys, Kapus and Kammas. The descendants of an Illatom son-in-law cannot automatically claim the rights of direct male descendants. (The adoption indeed may commence when a man admits another male to the family for the purpose of marrying his daughter – even if the actual marriage takes place after the man's death). The adoptee is never legally on the same footing as a son but must have a written agreement to back his claim, not merely proof of living in the father-in-law's house, assisting his widow or managing his

properties (See Aurasa).

ILUCHHA

Hindustani. A libertine, a vagabond, a swindler; a common term of abuse.

IMAMIA

Hindustani. The Shia sect of Muslims, from their recognition of the 12 imams.

IMLAK

An Arabic variation of malik or malkiyat, connoting ownership. A malik (owner) owns property (imlak).

INAM

Hindustani. A gift, a benefaction in general, a gift from a superior to an inferior.

- *Sanadi Inam*: A tax-free grant in perpetuity, issued by the then ruler, made valid by a Sanad or official deed of grant. A cash allowance from land revenue, paid for specific duties.
- *Devasthanam Inam*: Lands assigned for the support of religious establishments, both Hindu and Muslim, and for the upkeep of temples, shrines, mosques.
- *Dbarmadaya Inam*: Lands assigned to religious persons as an act of charity by heads of government and by village committees. Some of these are of considerable antiquity and are frequently backed by Danapatras, grants inscribed on copper plates.
- *Dabangi Inam*: Many, limited land assignments to a range of village workers and craftsmen, musicians, dancers and the families of individuals who lost their lives in the service of the state or the village. An Inamdard is a grant holder.

INKARI

Declining to pay Tirni, the dues charged for grazing in wasteland belonging to the state.

INLAK

Shows property owned.

IRAKKARANMAYOLA

Malayalam. Title deed of freehold land in Kerala.

ISTIMRARI

Perpetual or continuous (Istimrardar, the holder of a grant in perpetuity); a permanent settlement.

ITLANAMAH

Hindustani. A proclamation addressed generally to the chiefs of any country or the residents of any district.

JAGIR

A tenure common under Muslim rule in

which the public revenues of a given tract of a land were given over to a servant of the state together with the powers needed to collect such revenues and govern the district. Originally a life-term grant, it could become hereditary by paying a nazrana or fine and could or could not include rights to the soil. For example, jagir was a grant of land-revenue, not land.

JAIDAD

Persian. A district's potential for paying revenue; an assignment of territory for maintaining troops; in a document, it means immovable property; when it means movable, it is qualified by a prefix like 'mankula.'

JAMA

Amount, aggregate, total in general, but it especially means debit or receipt, the rental of an estate, land revenue payable to government. Its various applications to different types of land holdings is defined by the terms like Asal-jama, Ain-jama, Istimrari-jama (See Istimrari).

JAMADAR

In common usage, the chief or leader of any number of persons; in the military, a subaltern, a revenue or tax collector, a majordomo (See Jama).

JAMDAR

In old Marathi usage, a treasurer, an officer in charge of the jewels and gold, the head of an estate.

JAMI-UR-RUMUZ

A commentary on the *Nikayah* written by Shamsuddin Muhammad al-Khorasani al-Kohistani in Hijri 941 (1534 AD), described as 'one of the fullest and the clearest as well as one of the most useful law books frequently referred to in this country,' on questions of Muslim law.

JANMABHOGAM

Malayalam. The share in the produce of the land due to a Janmi, a hereditary proprietor.

JANMAKAR

Malayalam. A proprietor by inheritance, often an ancient one – whereas the term Janmakkudiyan is used to identify one who has bought his property himself instead of inheriting it.

JANMAVADA

A dispute or suit about landed property.

JASHN-I-WAZAN

Hindustani. The ceremony of weighing a person of rank against money and ornaments, which are afterwards given away in charity.

JAASTI

Telugu. Increase, addition; also used in common speech in Tamil, Kannada and Marathi; as a legal prefix, it connotes 'increase' of produce, assessment or extra tax-collection.

JAWABI-HUNDI

Marathi. Payment of money to a banker, as deposit for the value of a bill, to be paid to a drawer when informed that the bill has been encashed.

JAZIAH, JEZIA

Arabic. A capitation tax under Muslim rule, levied on all who refused to become Muhammadans. It was abolished in India by Mogul emperor Akbar, but re-introduced by his descendant Aurangzeb (See History: Dynasties).

JETH

From Sanskrit 'jyestha,' elder; the head or elder of the tenant body.

JINAYAT

Arabic. In Muslim law, any offences, crimes against person or property, but in practice generally restricted to the former, resulting in serious injury or death, punishable by retaliation or fine.

'JIS SE RAZI HO'

Hindustani. Meaning the person who wishes to sell has some right of selecting the person to whom he will make the offer.

JULKAR

A general term for 'water rights,' can include the right to drift or standard timber, fishing or similar interest in water produce.

JYESHTHANA

Sanskrit. The right of primogeniture, or the right of the eldest son to a larger portion of the patrimonial property than his brothers; a right formerly recognised but not obsolete, replaced by equal partition among the legal heirs.

KABALA

A contract, deed of conveyance or bill of sale, title deeds.

KABIN NAMEH

A dowry deed. A marriage settlement. Failure to prove Kabin Nameh does not disprove marriage.

KABIZ

The words 'kabiz' and 'malik' in a will unquestionably signify full proprietary ownership.

KADEEM

Headman of a village.

KALYANA-KURI

Malayalam. A marriage or other entertainment to which guests must subscribe according to their means.

KANI

Tamil. Property, possession, hereditary right.

KANUNGO

Hindi. An old time expounder of laws applied to village and district revenue officers, supervisor of patwaris or village accountants.

KAR

Or kari, a term for tax or cess. Income tax is Ayakar.

KARAO

Hindustani. The practice of marrying a widow to her deceased husband's younger brother common among Jat, Gujar and Ahir communities of north India. The practice is known in different parts as Urhari, Bathi and Daricha. Also termed a 'chadar' (sheet), from the custom of holding a sheet over the heads of such a couple at their wedding (See Kinship – Bhabhi, Devar).

KARNAVAN

Malayalam. The eldest male member and therefore manager of a tarwad in Malabar (See Tarwad). Karta, head of the Hindu undivided family.

KARZ

Hindustani. Debt, a general term. In Muslim law it also means a loan to be repaid by something dissimilar but of equal value.

KASI

Malayalam. Marriage gift among the Moplah Muslims of Kerala, with the giver having the right of getting back his gift or its value if the marriage is terminated.

KASU

Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam. A small coin, money in general. Related to the Sanskrit word for coin, karsha and the origin of the English 'cash'.

KATIL-KHATA

Arabic. Unintentional or accidental manslaughter.

KAUL

Hindustani. A word, promise, contract, a promise of pardon to a rebel or offender being induced to surrender, a revenue document stating the terms of contract or agreement.

KAUL BIRA

The betel (or bida) of contract: a ceremony among Indian Muslims where a betelnut is given to the nearest male relative of a girl at

the time of betrothal to obtain his consent.

KAZI

A judge. In the days of Muslim rule, a civil and criminal judge; under the British, an advisor to British courts on points of Muslim law; still a person who holds a position of esteem amongst Muslims, leads public prayers at festivals, a paid registrar of marriages and divorces, also usually holds some endowment.

KEFALAT

Hindustani. Incumbent, pledge, security; the root meaning is 'anything to stand on.'

KEIPPANOM

Malayalam. Lit. cash in hand. Property given on marriage among the Mappillah (Moplah Muslim) community of Kerala, returnable on the termination of the marriage to the widow or children or family holding.

KHAIR-KHWAH

Hindustani. A well-wisher; a common signature to an anonymous petition.

KHAIRAT

Hindustani. Alms, charity, lands given as charitable endowments – the term is especially used for Muslim charities (See Performing Arts: Music – Lalit ki Khairat).

KHAJAN

Hindustani. A tidal swamp for reclamation. Khajan lands are recognised as a special kind of partly cultivable lands in villages by the sea and on tidal creeks from which government could derive some revenue from fees for digging earth and keeping boats.

KHALISA

Under Muslim rule, the government exchequer, the revenue department, continued in the early period of British rule as applied to land, ie, those lands held immediately by the government. Later applied to the collective denomination of the Sikhs (See Religion: Sikhism).

KHAN

A title for Muslim nobles, especially of Persian or Pathan descent; also a common adjunct to Afghan or Pathan names. A Khanum or Khanam is the wife of a khan. A khan-khanan was a Lord of Lords, a title borne by some Mughal nobles. (The mystic poet Abdur Rahim 'Khan-e-Khanan' is buried near the Qutub Minar in south Delhi amidst well-tended gardens (See Archaeology/Architecture))

KHALSA

Hindustani. Originally, under the Mughals, revenue not assigned to a private individual but which belonged solely to the



Khooni Darwaza

government. Thereafter, the same word, apparently meaning free, not subject to anyone else, was taken by the Sikhs when they became a distinct government and people (See Religion: Sikhism).

KHARAJ

Tax, tribute, applied at first to the tax levied by Muslims on non-Muslims; later (and thereafter) meant revenue raised from land. Thus 'lakhiraj' is land exempt from government dues.

KHARCH-I-PAANDAAN

Lit. expenses of the betel-box, a personal allowance made to a wife among Muslim families of rank, especially in north India, fixed either before or after marriage, according to means.

KHASMAHAL

The district in the management of the Mughal government; the women's quarters in a Muslim palace.

KHOONI

Hindustani. Murder, from khoon or blood. 'Khooni Darwaza' is a small red sandstone gate on Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg. It marks the cold-blooded murder by Lt Hodson, a British Cavalry officer, of two young Mughal Princes (Mirza Abubakr and Mirza Mughal), the sons of the last emperor of Delhi, Bahadur Shah Zafar (See History: British Period).

KHOT

Hindustani. Originally a local land officer with an ancient hereditary title. Now a proprietor of land.

KHURSANDI

Lit. the toe/h hoof of a bullock; meaning a fraction of land.

KOTWAL

Hindi. The chief officer of police or superintendent of markets in a large town or city in northern India. A police station is known as a Kotwali.

KRITRIMA

The son so adopted also retains his right of inheritance in his original and natural family.

KUDIVARAM

Telugu. Gudivaram. The peasant's share of the crop.

LATHMAR

Hindustani. A tenant who makes an embankment for a certain kind of cultivation, one who beats down (mar) the clay with a staff or club (lath or lathi). A colloquial expression of the statement 'Possession is nine points of the law' goes *Jiski lathi, uski bhains* or 'he who wields the stick owns the buffalo.' (See Mind and Body: Sports and Games).

LAWALAD

Urdu. Lit. sonless. It is used with the term 'khandaan qaribi shohar' which indicates that in the absence of sons, the nearest male collaterals inherit.

LEKHAMUKHI

Hindustani. Lit. written bond, a kind of running mortgage in which the proprietor's share of the produce is made over to the creditor, who pays the revenue and keeps an account of the receipts and payments.

LUKTAH

Arabic. Property which a person finds lying on the ground and takes away in order to keep it in trust; a stay.

MAFI

Hindi. Lit. 'forgiven'; remitted, free – applied to lands exempt from revenue. A concession made pre-Independence to smaller lands of local dignitaries or to individuals with distinguished political or military service.

MAHAL

Hindi. A unit of revenue assessment, an estate. In Bengal, a province or district. Under Muslim rule a 'mahal,' legally was also a head or a department or revenue from miscellaneous taxes, eg Mahal-i-mahal, the duty on fish; Nimak-mahal, the revenue from the monopoly of selling salt.

MAHR

Arabic. A marriage settlement of property

on the wife; a necessary part of the Muslim marriage contract. It may be either 'Muajil', prompt or 'Muwajil', deferred to some specific time. If no Mahr is specified, at a time of marriage the wife is legally entitled to a settlement suitable to her condition, the Mahr-i-misl. A Mahr-nama is the deed of dower or settlement.

MAI-BAAP

Hindi. Lit. mother and father, also 'Ma-baap'; used when invoking pity, protection or redressal; a feudal term once applied to the nobility and later to administrative officers both during the Raj and after Independence.

MAKKATHAYAM

Malayalam. The ordinary law of inheritance from father to son, unlike Marumakkathayam, the law of inheritance through the female line.

MALBA

Hindustani. A collective term for the public expenses of a village community, such as entertaining a visitor, paying village servants, fines imposed or temple expenses. Also means rubble.

MAMOOL

Hindustani. Practised, established, usual, customary, can mean the customary dues to the state. In everyday speech, mamuli is simply 'ordinary' or 'average.'

MANU

A Hindu law-giver, author of the most important Hindu Smriti – the institutes of Manu or *Manavadharma Shastra* (See Philosophy).

MARYADA

In Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, honour or respect. In Malayalam and in Hindustani, it signifies custom or usage.

MATH

Temple or pilgrim-centre with an idol installed. The property of the temple is administered by the head of the math who is a celibate sanyasi and therefore cannot pass it on to any natural heirs.

MEHMANI

Hindustani. Hospitality to a guest. Allowance for entertaining pilgrims, travellers and strangers in general; a traditional version of an expense account, allowed formerly to zamindars in the form of a deduction from revenue.

MIRASDAR

The holder or possessor of a mirasi, land which is inherited.

MITAKSHARA

Ancestral property. It refers to property inherited by a Hindu male from his male ancestors in the male line. A son acquires an interest in it at birth.

The institutes of an ancient Indian law-giver, Yajnavalkya, acknowledged as the most authoritative record of Hindu laws. Its authority is admitted all over India except in Bengal, which follows the Dayabhaga or laws of inheritance written by Jimutavahana.

Mitakshara, the book, is actually a commentary on the Smriti (oral tradition) of Yajnavalkya by Vijnanasesana (See Philosophy).

MOHANTI, MAJUMDAR

Revenue accountants, clerks, scribes. Mahanty is a common surname in Orissa and Majumdar in Bengal.

MUBARAT

In Muslim law, separation by mutual consent, dissolution of a marriage or partnership by mutual consent.

MUFTI

Originally a Muslim law officer who expounded the laws which a Kazi would execute.

MUGHAL-BANDI

The level and cultivated part of Orissa from which the Mughal empire derived its revenue.

MUNSHI

Persian. A writer, a secretary, a term commonly applied to tutors in Arabic, Persian or Urdu. Also refers to low-ranking administrative officers in a town.

MUNSIF

Arabic. Justice, an arbitrator, a village headman, an Indian judge or revenue collector of lowest rank in British India. A munsif-katcheri is his court or office.

MUSAMMAT

A title once prefixed in Hindustani to the names of 'respectable' women in public documents and judicial proceedings.

MUSHRIF

An examiner, an inspector, an officer who authenticates accounts and documents.

MUTAH

Arabic. A temporary marriage, allowed by Shias but considered illegal by Sunnis.

MUTWALLI

Any person appointed either verbally or under an appropriate deed or instrument who administers any wakf property (See Wakf).

MUWAJJAL

Arabic. Payment deferred.

NAIB

A deputy as in Naib-kazi, Naib-i-Nazim (governor's assistant).

NAKHUDA

Persian. The captain of the ship.

NALUBHAYAN

Malayalam. Four kinds of produce in Malabar – coconut, arecanut, pepper and jackfruit.

NAMBOODIRI

Indigenous Malabar Brahmin. 'Namboodiripad' is a head Namboodiri or chief priest.

NANDAVANAM

Flower gardens in south India used for temple service, generally revenue free; also known as nandavanam inam.

NAZAR

Hindustani. A present, offering. A 'Nazrana' is consent money or premium for a grant or renewal of a lease; a present from an inferior to a superior.

NAZIR

Modern Hindi, a district sheriff. A superior or inspector. The executive officer of a court.

NEER/NIR

Sanskrit. Lit. water. A whole body of terms, many relating to irrigation, begin with 'Nir' in Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil. For example, niragante, (Kannada) is a village officer who superintends the distribution of water for irrigation, niranilai (Tamil) is marshy ground.

NEOTA

Lit. 'nature of.' Neota is not a legal but a social obligation and it therefore cannot be recovered by means of a suit.

NIKAH

Wedding, contract of marriage in Muslim law. (See Religion: Islam).

NIKASI

Gross income as distinguished from net income.

NISSANTHANA

Sanskrit. Without either male or female offspring.

OPPA

Malayalam. Signature, subscription, certificate. In Kannada, Tamil, oppacharam is an agreement, a contract, or in lay terms, formalities, as with a guest.

OTTI

Malayalam. A form of mortgage which gives the mortgagee possession and the entire produce of the land, the landlord retaining merely the proprietary title and the right to redeem. There is a body of terms relating to otti.

PADA

Sanskrit. A head. Title or topic of legal, judicial proceedings of which 18 are enumerated by Hindu lawgivers. Literally, it also means a quarter or 'as before,' but as a term of Hindu law it signifies the four stages in a lawsuit. Bhashapada – declaration, charge, plaint; uttarapada – reply, defence; kriyapada – the essential matter, proof or evidence, oral or documentary and saadhya siddhipada – the judgement or decision.

PADA VANDANIKA

Sanskrit. Lit. feet-salutation, property given by a husband to a wife at the time of marriage in return for her humble salutation or act of deference.

PADASAKSHA

Marathi. Corroborative evidence.

PAGRI

Hindustani. A poll tax formerly levied in the Delhi districts. In today's usage, a sum of money paid as deposit or as earnest money towards house-rent or relinquishment or sale of property. A pagri is also a turban.

PALAYA

A military fief. Palayakar (Poligar) formerly a military chief in south India in the hill and forest tracts. A few opposed the British and were suppressed, the best known being Veerapandi Kattabomman who became a folk hero. He was an inspiration to those taking part in the freedom struggle of the 1940s (See Nature: Animals).

PANCHAYAT

Assembly of five. By ancient Hindu custom, an elected assembly or jury of five persons arbitrate local matters in the first rung of village level administration.

PANCHNAMA

Persian. A record of property or other legal documents by which a law officer who seizes or confiscates unaccountable goods, as in an income tax raid, must prepare a panchnama (lit. 'five documents') listing whatever is seized in the presence of five witnesses of good repute from the citizenry. Usually only two are called.

PANDA

Hindi. The proprietary or presiding priest of a temple, often one who keeps copious records of genealogies, as in Hardwar, Puri,



Raja, a chief of the military tribe

Rishikesh and Varanasi; a pilgrim guide, a priest who is stationary in any particular temple.

PARCHA

Hindi. Statement showing demand. A 'parchi' is any bill, receipt, ticket, written note, or slip of paper with some announcement message.

PARDA-NASHIN

Persian. Sitting behind a parda or curtain. A Muslim woman who observes the practice of seclusion, applied to a 'respectable' woman who, on account of being a 'parda-nashin,' may be excused from personal appearance in a court of justice (See Religion: Islam).

PARGANA

A district, a province, a subdivision of a district (tehsil), a tract of country comprising many villages, of which several constitute a chakla or zilla (a district), such as the 24 Parganas of West Bengal.

PARINAYA

Sanskrit. Paraphernalia, ornaments, or other property acquired by marriage.

PARIVARTANAM

Sanskrit. Exchange, barter. In the south, it means the deed by which rent-free land is converted into revenue land and in ex-

change, an equivalent portion of assessed land is made exempt.

PARIVEDANA

Sanskrit. The marriage of a younger brother before that of the elder; considered an improper act in traditional families. A Parivitti is an elder brother whose younger brother is married before him (Parivetta).

PARTAP

Hindi-Punjabi (Pratap). Corresponds to the Urdu 'Iqbal' and the Latin 'Felix,' to mean prestige, resulting from success and good fortune.

PARWANA

Persian. A written pass or permit.

PAT-BANDHI

A statement of the particulars of the assets and debts of an estate as agreed between heirs and claimants.

PATIL

Patils and Kulkarnis are old terms, especially in Maharashtra, for the village headman and accountant; comprehensively dubbed Patilpatwari. Today both Patil and Kulkarni are common surnames.

PATTAM

A lease or simple deed; a title, especially an academic one; a rank in service.

PEON

Formerly a foot-soldier. An inferior officer or servant employed in revenue, police or judicial duties, originally armed with a sword and a shield. Today, an office errand-boy or messenger.

PERUNICAL TARISU

Tamil. Land left waste more than 15 years.

PESHKASH

A present or tax particularly to government, first fruits, fine, especially the quit-rent taken for lands which for any reason are exempt from full assessment.

PIND

Ahar, pind, khata and pet ahar are appellations for a piece of land with an embankment (pind), used for storing water. The ditch from which earth is dug for the upkeep of the pind is a khata. The bed of the ahar, where water is stored, is pet. But ahar is also applied to just the embankment, as the pet is often cultivated fields. In Punjabi, pind is also a general word for village, settlement or hamlet. A popular saying about opportunists goes: *Pind basa nabi, chor-uchakke aa gaye* or 'the village is barely settled, but the thieves have arrived.'

PODUNILAM

Tamil. Common ground, a common.

RAFA NAMEH

Persian. Under Muslim law, a deed of relinquishment.

RAHASYA-VIBHAGA

Partition of assets made privately in the presence of a few friends.

RAHIT NAMA

Punjabi. A code of rules, especially those attributed to the last Sikh guru, Gobind Singh (See Religion: Sikhism).

RAI

Hindi. Ray or Roy in Bengal. Under Muslim governments, a title given to Hindu civil officers of high rank which became a family designation, as for Raja Ram Mohun Roy or Satyajit Ray (See People; Visual Arts: Cinema).

RAIS

Arabic. A prince or chief, often connected in usage with raiyat or subject. Rais stands for a person of means.

RAJA

King, chieftain, nobleman. A title in ancient times given to chiefs of the second or military Hindu tribe (Kshatriya). Therefore, used and appropriated by a series of central Asian immigrants and handed out as titles by succeeding foreign rulers. A Rajkumar

was a Raja's son, an heir-apparent was a Yuvaraj, the palace was known as a Rajwara, while the court was a Rajdarbar. 'Raja' also became part of civil terminology: Rajpath (Hindi, King's highway), Rajabhagam (Telugu, the government share of the revenue or crop) while 'Raj' itself meant 'rule,' hence, the British Raj.

RAKHI

Protection money levied by the Sikhs from tracts of country which they subdued but did not occupy. It varied from a fifth to a half of the rental or government share of the produce.

RASM

Hindi. Custom, usage, law. After the death of the head of the family, the eldest son or seniormost male is invested ceremonially with a turban, in a rite called Rasm Pagri, to signify his position as the new head.

REKHA

Lit. line. Standard revenue imposed by ancient Hindu rulers (See Religion: Hinduism—Epics—Ramayana).

ROZANA

Hindustani. A daily allowance.

ROZNAMKHA

Hindustani. A diary.

RUKAH

Arabic. A short letter or note. A note of hand.

RUKHSAT

Arabic. Leave, dismissal, the dismissal of a guest. Traditionally, amongst Hindus and Muslims, it was the host, not the visitor who closed a formal interview or visit, through an act called 'giving Rukhsat.' This was done by the host garlanding the guest with flowers, presenting him with a bouquet, paansupari (betel leaves and areca nuts) and sprinkling rosewater on his head.

RUTA

Things extracted from land, like chalk, sand, coal, minerals.

SABHA

An assembly, an assemblage of persons of rank or respectability, the hall where they meet, a court of justice, a gaming room, fine arts or performing arts subscription society.

SADHANA PATRIKA

Telugu. A bond, deed, a will.

SADAR

Arabic. Also Sadr. Principal, chief, the chief of government, the most important court of civic administration. Many large cities and towns in the north have a major market

called Sadar Bazaar. The son of Kashmir's last ruler was for a period after Independence, the regent of Kashmir, Sadr-e-Riyasat.

SADAWARTA

Hindi. The daily distribution of food in charity to passersby, mendicants and paupers.

SADHANA MURI

Tamil. A promise or voucher in writing.

SADHARANA

Sanskrit. 'That which is common,' as a common property or possession.

SADHORAJA

Sanskrit. The son who was already in the womb of the mother at marriage.

SADIR

Tamil. Boundary (See Performing Arts: Dance—Bharata Natyam).

SADR ADALAT

The highest court established under the East India Company in the three Presidencies: Bombay, Calcutta, Madras. The criminal court was nizamat adalat and the civil was diwani adalat.

SAFINAMA

A testimonial by the defendant that the matter in dispute has been settled; a deed of release. A safi-khat is a receipt.

SAGOTRA

Sanskrit. A kinsman, one allied by common descent and name (See Samana).

SAHIB

Hindi. Saheb in Arabic. A lord, a master, often affixed to titles of rank or profession like Raja Sahib, Collector Sahib or Doctor Sahib.

SAHODARA

Sanskrit. A brother from the same set of parents; Sahodari, a sister by the same mother; Sahoda, son of a pregnant bride—if a pregnant woman marries, whether her pregnancy is known or not, the son belongs to the husband and is called sahoda.

SAMANA

Sanskrit. Equal, like, same.

- Samanagotra, of the same lineage.
- Sakulya, a kinsman not nearer than five or seven degrees removed.
- Samanodaka, kinsmen from the seventh to fourteenth degrees from a common ancestor, connected by offerings of water to those ancestors.

SAMBANDHAM

Marriage, alliance (See Kinship: Sambandhi).

SAMUDAYAM

Tamil/Malayalam. In today's usage, society in general. Originally common stock or lands, a council for managing common property or the concerns of a temple. An agent or manager of such a body is a Samudayi.

SIKKA

A die, stamp, seal, mark, stamped coin, royal signet; was especially the name of the silver currency of the kings of Delhi, adopted by other kings and later the East India Company (See History: Dynasties).

STHANAM

Malayalam. A station, rank or dignity. A sthani is the holder of a sthanam and a sthanikam is one who holds an office, a governor, a superintendent of a district; the (sometimes hereditary) manager of a temple, a person who officiates at or supervises the ceremonies in a temple.

STREEDHAN

The property held by a Hindu woman unconditionally, over which she has independent control and which descends to her daughter as next of kin.

STREEDHARMA

Sanskrit. The duty of a wife or of a woman in general. In older Vedic times women appeared to have had high status and independence. But in later times, the rights of women were severely curtailed in favour of sons or male relatives. A woman was bound to the extent that whenever her husband was away, she could not wear bright clothes, jewellery or flowers. Apart from streedhan she had no property rights and was deemed in turn the ward of her father, husband and sons or male relatives. Only courtesans had the right to education in ancient India.

SUBAH

A province, such as Bengal. A grand division of a country, further subdivided into Cirkars, Chuklahs, Parganas and villages. The present divisions are: State – Pranth; District – Zilla; Sub-division – Taluka; Village – Gaon.

SULAH

Hindi. Reconciliation, compact, treaty. In law a compromise or agreement that is disputed. A sulah namah (Persian) is a deed of compromise.

SULKA

Sanskrit. Tax, toll, duty, marriage fee or dower, profits of domestic labour were considered the prerequisite of the wife. In south India this becomes sunka or chunka, eg. the customs department of the Revenue

service is known as 'sunka ilakka.' A 'sunka chauki' is a Custom House.

TAFRIK

Hindustani. Separation, division. In Muslim law a judicial divorce, one pronounced by the Kazi as distinct from one executed by the husband in his own authority (See Talak).

TAHSIL

A district subdivision, divided for revenue and administration. A tahsildar.

TAHZIRAT-I-HIND

Lit. the Indian Penal Code. Enacted in 1861 by the British Raj, it was adopted by free India. Its core section, based on English, Hindu and Muslim law was drafted by Thomas Babington Macaulay.

TAIUL

Royal domain; once meant the emperor of Delhi's private estates.

TAKA

A coin originally with varying values in different parts of India but now a general term for 'rupee' or 'money,' especially in Bengal.

TAKHARUJ

Partition of an estate amongst themselves by lawful heirs.

TAKSIM

Division, portion, sharing, a portion, a share. A taksim-nama is a deed of partition amongst joint proprietors.

TAKWA

Legally, a lethal weapon.

TALAB-NAMA

Warrant, writ, notice or summons.

TALAK-I-AHSAN

The most reputable kind of divorce in which the husband pronounces 'talak' which literally means, 'I have divorced you,' once before the date or time of the woman's probation has expired (a month). This is ir-reversible (See Amr-ba-yad).

TALAK-I-BIDAIT

Heterodox divorce in which the husband makes the usual declaration 'Talak' three times in one month.

TALAK-I-HUSN

The form of divorce in which the husband pronounces three different sentences that culminate in divorce. The wife cannot be taken back unless married and divorced by another man.

TALAK-I-SUMNA

Legal divorce according to traditional law.

TALAK-NAMA

Warrant, writ, notice or summons.

TALAK-UL-BIDAIT

Irregular divorce where a husband repudiates his wife by three divorces at once. Valid form according to the Hanafi school and irreversible.

TANKHA

Hindi. A lumpsum rent on an entire holding. In general terms, 'salary' like 'pagar' and 'kamaai' (earning).

TARWAD

In Kerala, a joint undivided family consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor in the Nair community which adheres to matrilineal succession.

TAULIYAT

Transferring property; the overseeing of mosques and religious establishments.

THEKA

Hindi. A contract or farm, a lease or licence. A thekedar is a contractor, in the commonest sense a labour contractor who provides hired labour at daily rates for building and construction.

TONDAI-MANDALAM

Tamil. Tondaman's land which is an ancient tract in northern Tamil Nadu comprising the modern districts of North and South Arcot and Chengalput. Presumably named after a great prince (Tondaman) who conquered this region in the pre-Christian era and granted special privileges to its first settlers. Many centuries later, 'Tondaman,' which properly means 'lord,' was the designation of a petty chief near Thiruchirapalli (Trichinopoly), whose country was known to early English writers as Tondaman's land.

TULA

Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam. Tola – a measure, varying of grain, gold. A pair of scales.

Tulabharam is an equal weight of gold, bananas or grain with the weight of a donor, meant for distribution, a special ceremony particularly at the Guruvayoor (Krishna) temple in Kerala. (See Holy Places: Temples) Tuladana, gifting one's weight in gold, silver or grain as largesse, was a tradition on royal birthdays.

TULAPARIKSHA

Sanskrit. Ordeal by scales; an obsolete custom in which an accused person is first weighed accurately in a balance, removed, and after special ceremonies are performed, weighed again. If lighter than be-

fore, he was declared innocent. If equal or heavier or if the scales were inexplicably damaged, he was guilty.

UMD

Arabic. A wilful act. Used by Muslim criminal lawyers as the opposite of khatta, accidental.

URF

Hindustani. Known as, alias.

VAGDANA

Sanskrit. From 'vak' – speech, 'dana' – donation, gift. A gift in words, a promise, a betrothal; 'vagdatta' is promised, affianced. Vagnischarya is an assurance, averment.

VAKDANA

A verbal or promised gift, the promise to give a boy in adoption or daughter in marriage.

VAKIL, VAKEEL

A person authorized to act for another, a lawyer; once meant an ambassador or agent of a royal court sent on a special mission.

VARAHA

Tamil. The gold coin commonly called 'pagoda' by Europeans.

VATAN, WATAN

In popular usage, one's country, native land, home. A vatandar (Marathi) is legally the holder of inherited property, a vatan-bandhu is a co-heir or joint inheritor and a vatanwari is a patrimonial estate, while a vatan patra is a title deed of hereditary property.

VIRAMITRODAYA

A digest on ancient Hindu law written by Mitra Mishra; the authority on points left doubtful by Mitakshara or on cases on which Dayabhaga is silent (See Mitakshara, Dayabhaga).

VISHAMA-VIBHAGA

Sanskrit. A division of the property by the father in his lifetime amongst his sons in various proportions; could be of self-acquired property, not ancestral.

VYAVAHARI

Relating to law or judicial procedure, a suit or a litigant, an adult, one who is of age to manage his own affairs.

VYAVASTHA

Marathi. Separating, setting apart, settlement, arrangement, a written opinion on point of law, with citation of original texts.

WAJIB-UL-ARZ

Hindustani. Lit. fit for or worthy of representation; a petition, a written statement or

representation, a written agreement. Once, village administration paper, 'Wajib' means right, proper, necessary.

WAKF

Muslim. An endowment, property dedicated to pious and charitable uses. When a property is declared wakf, the original owner is divested of it and it vests in god.

WARIS

Heir, inheritance, inheritor.

WASIAT-NAMA

A written will or testament.

YAJAMAN

Hindustani. A person who employs a priest or priests to perform for him either fixed or occasional religious ceremonies; a householder, head of the family, clan, caste, tribe.

YAMIN

Hindi. A conditional divorce contingent upon some future possibility.

YAU'TAKA

Sanskrit. All kinds of property acquired by a woman at marriage; also the gifts to a youth or child at his initiatory ceremonies, gifts made to the bride while seated with the bridegroom during the marriage ceremony.

YAUMIA

Hindi. Daily allowance to pensioners of any kind. A yaumiadar is a pensioner.

YAVANA

Sanskrit. A foreigner, applied originally to the Ionians (Greeks) and later to Arabs and Europeans. Distinct from Yav'vana, Sanskrit for 'youth'.

YOGAKSHEMA

Sanskrit. Property, possessions, being well-off; in law, especially properties for religious and charitable purposes, digging tanks and reservoirs. 'Yoga' denotes a cause of obtaining something not already obtained, a sacrificial act for a good cause. 'Kshema' denotes an auspicious act which becomes the means of conserving what is already obtained.

ZAIL

Punjabi. Originally a group of villages looked after a zaildar, a man of local influence.

ZAKAT

The legal alms or title collected amongst Muslims for distribution to the poor. The term means 'justification' and is applied to this tax, as the zakat portion sanctifies the rest of the income for the user (See Religion: Islam).

ZAMANAT

Guarantee or bail money.

ZAMINDARI

Estate, revenue unit (See Mahal) held by a zamindar, an owner or co-sharer, with interest in the common land of the mahal and its management, with the right to realize rent from tenants, liable to pay fixed revenue to the government. The Zamindari Act (1947-8) abolished this system so that the actual cultivator could own the land he tilled.

ZANJIR-ZAMINI

Hindi. Chain-security: a number of persons binding themselves severally or jointly to each other; joint responsibility of cultivators for revenue or for a loan from a banker.

ZENANA, ZANANA

A term of Persian origin, it refers to the part of the house occupied by women or the system of secluding women. Its old Hindu equivalent is Antahpura or interior apartments which were the women's domain. Traditional families, particularly amongst the Rajputs and Muslims still have special 'women's quarters.'

ZIHAR

Arabic. In Muslim Law, divorce consequent upon a man's comparing his wife to some female relative with whom marriage is prohibited. A separation must take place until proper expiation is made (See Talak).

ZIMMA

Originally a deed of protection, an assurance of immunity in life and property granted to Jews or Christians under Muslim rule. Today, a zimmedar is simply a responsible person and zimmedari is responsibility.

ZOR-TALAB

Forced exaction of revenue.

ZUBAN BANDI

Deposition, an affidavit, a written record of the question put to a writer and his answers.

ZULFAKIRI

A silver coin of the former kingdom of Hyderabad.

ZULM/ZULUM

Hindi. Tyranny, oppression, extortion, a heavier assessment than people can bear.



LITERATURE

Sabitya

With her wealth of
language and literature, India is
rightly sung of as *Sumadburabhashini* –
of many sweet tongues – in
the nationalist song *Vande Mataram*,
the hymn to the Motherland

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

Of the 5,000 extant languages and dialects in the world, 845 are Indian. The country resounds with major languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Hindi (officially the national language) and English, the associate *lingua franca*. The Sahitya Akademi (the premier body of letters) recognises 22. Several other languages not officially listed also have fine literary traditions like Sindhī or Maithili. There are four distinct language groups in India: Munda (tribal), Tibeto - Burman (mainly in the north-east), Dravidian (south) and Sanskritic (north, east, west).

The spread of the Sanskritic (Indo-Aryan) group of languages can be traced through the history of regional literatures. In general, it is acknowledged that the *Rig Veda* is the earliest known work in Sanskrit. Vedic Sanskrit reached its classical form in Panini's great grammar, *Ashtadhyayi* (Eight Chapters) written in the 4th century BC. Indologists hold it to be the most scientific and detailed grammar composed before the 19th century in any part of the world. From Panini's time, the language was fixed and began to be called 'Samskritam' (perfected/refined) as against Prakrit (natural), the popular dialects.

Prakrit, much simpler than Sanskrit, was what the masses spoke during the 6th century BC and it is supposed that the Buddha preached in a Prakrit dialect called Magadhi. One of the dialects, Pali, became the vehicle of Buddhism and is still the religious language of Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Burma and South-East Asia. The Jains, meanwhile, made use of a hybrid dialect, Ardha-Magadhi (half-Magadhi) as their sacred language. Sauraseni, spoken in western Uttar Pradesh and used in drama for the speech of women and Maharashtri, spoken in the Deccan and popular for lyric songs, were the two other important Prakrit dialects. Another stage in the Indo-Aryan stream was Apabrahmsa (meaning 'distorted'): vernaculars that grew into Gujarati and Rajasthani in the west and Bengali in the east.

Thereafter the modern Sanskritic languages of India developed regionally on distinct lines.

In the south, the Dravidian languages had been flourishing for centuries. The four major tongues, Tamil (the oldest) Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam have long literary traditions and the last three in their modern form have borrowed much from Sanskrit. In 1953 the Indian provinces were divided linguistically.

Writing Material

Originally the leaf of the talipot palm (talapatra) which was dried, smoothed, cut into sized strips and bound with cord or braid, before being enclosed between painted, lacquered wooden covers. Today the talapatra survives as a base for delicate scrolled paintings by the patra masters of Orissa and in some temples of south India. In the Himalayan districts, where dried palm leaf was hard to get, the smoothed inner bark of the birch was used. Cotton, silk, wood, bamboo, and copper plates (tamrapatra) were also in vogue. Paper invented in China in the early 2nd century AD was known in India but was more widely used in central Asia.

Most Indian inks were made from lamp black or charcoal, applied with a reed pen. In the south, a stylus was used to etch on a palm leaf which was then rubbed with finely powdered lamp black to outline the letters. Many Indian languages made a direct leap from palm leaf to print, first introduced by the Europeans. The first book printed in India was written in Roman by a Jesuit missionary, Joao de Bustamanti, in Goa in 1557, while the first book in moulded type was in Tamil printed in 1713.

Twenty-two officially recognised languages (including Sanskrit and English) make Indian literature an unwieldy segment to document. But several basic facts stand clear.

Sanskrit heavily influenced the Dravidian languages and from the 19th century, European genres introduced by colonials affected almost all Indian literature.

The pattern of development for many literatures in India is intriguingly similar: the first works were usually adaptations and translations of the Sanskrit classics, particularly the two great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Puranas.

The oral tradition has always been strong and vivid, existing in all the language families. It is more deep-rooted and pervasive than the written word, with which it coexists as an equally valid entity in modern India.

ASSAMESE

The history of the language begins from the 14th century in the reign of King Durlabh Narayan, patron of poets like Harivara Vipra. This evolutionary phase continued into the 16th century when translations were made of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It was followed by the Vaishnava period, with a fund of Puranic literary output. Prose works and biographies were also written in this period, which lasted well into the 18th century. Indra Narayan Dev (the son of Durlabh Narayan) supported poets like 'Kaviratna Saraswati,' who hailed from the village Sheela in Barpeta. He adapted the *Mahabharata* tales, collectively called *Jayadrathavada*.

Another major 14th century epic translator was Madhava Kandali. Folk tradition threw up the Manasha poets, who told stories in song, sung by a chorus called Ojapali. The best known Manasha poets were Pali, Durgavara, Mankar and Pitambar Deva. Kings like Vishwasinha and Samarasinha of Cooch Behar commissioned more epic translations like the *Giti Ramayana*, *Nalopakhyaṇa* (See Myths and Legends; Nala Damayanti) and *Usha Parinayam*.

A major medieval poet Shankaradeva, wrote six dramas, drawn mainly from the *Bhagavata Purana*: episodes in Lord Krishna's life, written in Brajboli, used to preach Vaishnavism. He was a Sanskrit scholar as well and wrote a volume of shlokas compiled as *Bhakti Ratnakara* based on Sanskrit poetics. He also introduced congregational prayer services which soon spread into a mass Vaishnava movement, sparking a renaissance in art, literature and music in Assam. After a long pilgrimage all over India, Shankaradeva introduced the 'Ankia nat' (See Performing Arts: Theatre). Another prominent 16th century Vaishnava translator from Sanskrit was Rama Saraswati, who laboured over 30,000 shlokas from the *Mahabharata*, Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* and *Bhima Charita*. Hagiographies called *Sant Sampradaya* and mytho-romantic poetry for ordinary people by Shankaradeva's pupil, Ananta Kandali, marked this period.

It was Bhattadeva in the 17th century who initiated Assamese prose with works like *Katha Gita*, *Katha Ratnavali* and *Katha Bhagavata*. He also translated parts of the *Ramayana*. His language is highly literary with a devotional slant (bhaktiya bhasha), which is still in vogue for ceremonial occasions.

Thereafter the Ahom period commenced with the centre for Assamese literary development shifting from western to eastern Assam. The Ahom dynasty competently recorded political events through chronicles called Buranjis. There were also books written on utilitarian subjects like astronomy and medicine and on dance, music, ethics and morals. Samples of such works are *Hastividya* (case of the elephant), *Ghoranidana* (equestrian diseases), *Sribasta Mukta* (hand poses in dance), *Nitilatankura* (morals) and *Bhusavati* (astrology). Puranic translations and Vaishnava literature also continued right into the 18th century.

The establishment of the British empire in Assam in 1826 began the modern phase of Assamese. The American Baptist missionaries had introduced translations of the *Bible* in 1813 as well as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It also began a literary magazine, *Arumodaya* (1846) and compiled a dictionary and textbooks in Assamese. The foremost Assamese writer of the time was Anandaran Dhekial Phookan who, through his memoranda, urged the development of Assamese. Besides him, Hemchandra Barua published an Assamese lexicon and textbooks for schools. Gunabhiram Barua compiled a

history of Assam, travelogues and social plays. These pioneering efforts led to the establishment of Assamese as the official language in 1873. The literary magazine *Jonaki* (1890) marked the era of romanticism in Assamese literature. Writers like Lakshminath Bezbarua, Chandrakumar Agarwalla, Hemchandra Goswami, Padmanath Gohanbarua, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Rajanikanta Bardoloi and Kamalakanta Bhattacharya contributed to it. They wrote poetry, historical novels and personal essays.

By 1910 many European poetic trends were explored. Raghunath Chaudhury was a poet of nature, on the lines of Wordsworth; Hiteshwar Barbarua wrote sonnets and mytho-historical narratives. Jatindranath Dowerah was a lyrical poet, while Ambikagiri chose the poetry of struggle, determination and patriotism. The plays of this era, fused dramatic and poetic elements, using the blank verse technique to reveal the follies of society. The influence of social reformers in the 1920 - 40 period was one of national regeneration, when Gandhian thought and ideals dominated along with romantic poetry and prose. Binanda Chandra Barua, Dimbeshwar Neog, Atulchandra Hazarika, Anandachandra Barua and Debakanta Barua sang of love and nature, and also deplored contemporary life. The noted dramatists of this time revolutionised Assamese theatre by their handling of plot and character. The best known productions at the time were *Sonit Kunuari*, *Karenger Ligiri* and *Rupalim*.

The novel was comparatively low key. Rajanikanta Bardoloi, Daibachandra Talukdar and Dandikatha Kalita wrote on social themes. With Independence, the old romantic strain in poetry disappeared. Instead, a sharply questioning tone arose, evidenced through surrealism, symbolism, imagism and European poetic devices. Novels and short stories proliferated. Essays, literary criticism, biographies and travelogues fast gained ground. Rich contributions came from poets like Hem Barua, Navakanta Barua, Nilamani Phukan, Mahendra Bara, Namalprabha Bardoloi, Hiren Bhattacharya, Hari Barkakati, Bhaben Barua and Bireswar Barua. And fiction writers, Nirod Choudhury, Chandra Prasad Saikia, Lakshmi Narayan Bora, Mamani Goswami Raicham, Nirupoma Bargohain, Hemen Bargohain, Birendra K. Bhattacharya, Syed Abdul Malik, Bina Barua and others. Drama was furthered by the works of Prabin Phukan, Satyaprasad Barua, Anil Choudhuri, Girish Choudhuri, Sarbe-

shwar Chakravarti, Arun Sarma, Basant Saikia, Mahendra Barthakur, Praphulla Bora and Ali Haider. Today, though a feeling of alienation from the social order is apparent, the general mood in literature is upbeat despite Assam's political travails.

BENGALI

The earliest literary evidence is found on stone plaques in north Bengal (4th-5th century AD). Copper plates thereafter record grants to temples and Buddhist monasteries, especially during Pala rule (See History: Dynasties). As with other Indian languages, the earliest literature is all didactic and religious, particularly of the Shakti cult. Early poetry was mainly narrative religious poems and a few couplets praising the Pala and Sena kings, short poems with refrains and longer songs called Prabandhas. Wandering puppeteers and story-tellers furthered the oral tradition, while by the 14th century various cults, whose gurus' names all ended in 'natha' were in vogue. The best known gurus were Gorakshanatha and Minanatha. Their meeting was musically dramatised by Vidyapati in *Goraksha Vijaya* in 1403. Buddhist, Shaiva and Vaishnava tantriks meanwhile had furthered the evolution of the vernacular (laukika) between the 11th and 13th centuries, by writing mystic songs called *Charyagita* on the pattern of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. Mystic riddles in short couplets called Doha or Vajragiti (written in the Champai metre) were also current and Saraha was the best known writer.

It was Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (See Festivals; Sages and Saints) who in the 15th century culturally united the people of Bengal and Orissa with his Vaishnava cult. A whole genre of hagiography arose, detailing his life and philosophy in various forms. This lasted several centuries. Some of them followed the pattern of Sanskrit Agama texts, where the story is written as if related by Shiva to Parvati (See Religion: Hinduism). Chaitanya himself pioneered the devotional song form called Namakirtan in Bengali and Brajboli, which several enthusiastic followers furthered well into the 16th century.

The 17th century is special for Dharma-mangala poetry, which flourished in the Damodar river valley, centred on a folk hero, Lausen. The 18th century is also characterised by poetry, especially that of Bharatchandra Ray who wrote mytho-historical romances like the trilogy *Anadamangal* (1752).



A flavour of regional literature

It was in the 19th century with the efforts of the Serampore Mission and the Sanskrit scholars of Fort William College that the impact of European literature was felt in Bengal. A new breed of writers arose, foremost among whom was social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The first modern epic poem, *Meghnad Badh Kavya* was by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Rabindranath Tagore played a catalysing role in poetry, drama, song, fiction and dance (See People). Kazi Nazrul Islam (*Bidrobi*) earned the title of 'Rebel Poet' with his campaign against old superstitions. Pearey Chand Mitra wrote the first Bengali novel, *Alaler Gharer Dulal*, in 1858.

Seven years later, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel *Durgesh Nandini* was published. His prose style in novels like *Kapalakundala*, *Brishabriksha*, *Chandrasekhar* and *Ananda Math* was much lauded. The last, full of nationalist fervour was widely translated into other Indian languages and one of its songs, *Vande Mataram*, became a national classic.

Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (*Srikanta Dena Paoba*, *Baradidi*, *Charitraheen* and *Shesh Prashna*) was another novelist, vividly portraying the India around him. His work, too, was translated and absorbed into other regional languages.

The 'Kallol' (upheaval) group of writers who saw the world around them in fairly grim terms, emerged in the early part of the century. The best known was Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, through his novel *Pather Panchali*, later filmed by Satyajit Ray as the first in his 'Apu' trilogy. Tarashanker Bandopadhyaya, leftist writers like Manik Banerjee (*Dinaratrir Kabiyo* and *Padmanadir Majhi*) were the well-known novelists of the 1950s, while Mahashweta Debi, Gopal Haldar, Manoj Basu, Ashapura Debi, Sunil Ganguli and Bimal Mitra, Ashim Ray (Banaphul) and Kamal Mazumdar are some of the better known later novelists. Bengali literature continues to flourish with the annual Puja publications providing a unique forum for writers, particularly short story writers,

Children's literature in Bengal was pioneered by three generations of the Ray family – Upendra Kishore, Sukumar and Satyajit, the late filmmaker. Most Bengali children are weaned on Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol* (Nonsense Rhymes).

GUJARATI

The language of Gujarat state, it shares a common descent with neighbouring Rajasthan from the Apabrahmsa Sauraseni.

This common language prevailed in both states till the end of Solanki rule in the 12th century. The period from 1150 to 1450 is the era of old Gujarati literature, mainly didactic Jaina tracts, some chaupais (poems), historical ballads like Shridhar's *Ranamal-lachandra* (1390) and *Prithvichanda Charita* by Manikya Chandra Suri.

The Bhavai folk drama was created by Asait in this period and flourished later (See Performing Arts: Theatre).

The Bhakti period of devotional compositions lasted from 1450 to 1850: padas, chhapps, garabo, garabi, akhyana katha and dyavarta, were some of the literary forms in vogue for lyrical and narrative verse. Narsi Mehta and Meera Bai (See Sages and Saints) wrote devotional lyrics; Akho expounded Advaita (See Philosophy) in *Akhe-git*; Premanand (1636-1734) wrote *Nalakavya* (See Myths and Legends: Nala Damayanti) and *Okha-baran*; Samal Bhatt wrote moralistic fables like *Madanamohana* and *Vidya-vilasini*. The last Bhakti minstrel Dayaram (1776-1852) wrote devotional love lyrics called garabi that are still sung by devout Vaishnavas.

Many religious cults fuelled devotional compositions in this period. The Swami Narayana sect and the Kabirpanthis, influenced mass attitudes to religion, initiating a switch from caste-ridden, priestly Hinduism to a direct communication with a personal god.

The period 1820-1898 saw the rapid transition of Gujarati literature from devotional to socio-political themes and modern genres. Dalpatram wrote the first Gujarati drama, *Lakshmi* (1851), Narmad introduced the essay, Navatram Pande (1836-88) pioneered literary criticism, Nandshankar Mehta wrote the first historical novel *Karanghdo* and Mahipatnam Nilkanth, the first 'social' novel, *Sasu-Vabhuni Ladai* (1866). These new strains were explored further by other writers. Balvilas Ramanbhai Nilkanth, a social reformer, wrote the parody *Bhadrambhadr*; Anand Shankar Dhruva wrote on Indian and western philosophy in essays like *Apho-Dharma*, and literary criticism in *Kavya-tatya-vichar*. Kant, an agnostic poet, introduced the narrative verse Khand-kavya, while Kalapi, a prince, wrote on love in Ghazals (songs) and Khand-kavyas and a remarkable travelogue, *Kashmirno Pravas*. Balwant Rai Thakur (1869-1952) with his crisp, elegant, thoughtful verse, influenced younger poets.

Educational theatre in Gujarati was pioneered by Nrisinha Vibhakar (1888-

1925) who wrote and staged plays like *Aggadi*, *Dhara*, *Gurjari*, *Akho* and *Kapur-nodivo*. He even adapted plays from Sanskrit and Greek and was the only Indian to write a 12-part autobiography that detailed contemporary Gujarati drama too. One-act plays on western lines became popular thereafter. Mahatma Gandhi's biography *Satyna Prayoga* was a landmark in Gujarati literature. Kakasahab Kalelkar (1886-1961) wrote essays reflecting the aesthetics of Rabindranath Tagore and was followed by Kishorelal Mashruwala, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh and Jagatram Dave.

Sundaram, Umashankar, Jethalal Joshi and Snehrashmi wrote humanist poetry while leading novelists like Kanhaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887-1971; See People) and Ramlal Desai (1892-1954) wrote on social themes, mythological romances and scholarly works reinstating Aryan culture. Dhumaketu, a historical novelist, earned the sobriquet 'Gujarat's Premchand'; while Jhaverchand Meghani, a socialist poet wrote stirring works like *Yugavandara*.

Rural Gujarat was portrayed in novels by Chunilal Madia, Pushkar Chandavarkar and Ishvar Pethikar.

Poetry and fiction (short story and novel) dominate Gujarati literature thereafter well into the post-Independence era. Gandhian writers like Darshak (Manubhai Pacholi) Gunvantra Achary, Umashankar Joshi, Jayanti Dalal, Gulabdas Bodker, Jayant Khatri are noteworthy.

Then there are the modern novelists in the stream-of-consciousness genre like Suresh Joshi (*Chinnpatra*), Srikant Shah (*Asti*), Mukund Parikh (*Phero*), plot-oriented novelist Raghuvir Chaudhuri, and other 'moderns' like Ravji Patel (*Ash-rugbar*), Harindra Dave (*Palnun Prati-bimb*), Dhiruben Patel (*Vansho Ankur*), Saroj Pathak (*Nightmare*) and Jayant Gadit (*Char Pakshi*).

In the genre of poetry Rajindra Shah, Niranjana Bhagat, Hasmukh Pathak, Nalin Raval are some well-known modernists while Suresh Joshi writes of the modern individual's isolation and Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh explores the bizarre. Ramesh Parikh, Jagdish Joshi, Labhshankar Thakar, Sitanshu Yashashchandra and Chandrakant Sheth are strongly experimental Gujarati poets in both language and image, reacting sharply to traditional poetry. Gujarati literature reflects the modern world's problems and questioning.

HINDI

The official national language of India, spoken mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, it is derived from regional Prakrits like Sauraseni and Ardha Magadhi. It first occurs in religious works by cultists like Siddhas and Nathpanthis from around the 8th century AD. Between the 10th and 13th centuries was an epoch of heroic poetry called the Veergatha Kaal, notably Chand Bardai's *Prithviraj Raso* on the last Hindu king of Delhi. The Maithili poet Vidyapati flourished then and his compositions are part of classical dance even today. Amir Khusro, the controversial Delhi courtier and musician wrote his pahelis (riddles) in this period, in the Khariboli dialect.

From the 13th to 16th century AD (the Bhakti period or age of devotion) a number of writer-composers from across India, often of humble origin, soared to sainthood with their intensely direct and humane notions of man in relation to god.

Kabir Das' maxims in short verses called pada or doha (couplet) were compiled into the *Kabir Granthavali*. The Nirguna Bhakti movement of Kabir gave impetus to Sufism in India (See Religion: Hinduism, Islam). Poets Malik Muhammad Jayasi took Hindi folk tales and fashioned them into literary epics like *Padmavati*, using the doha/chaupal (couplet/quaternion) narrative verse metre. Other poetic works from this period were Kulban's *Mrigavati*, Manjhan's *Madhumalati* and *Gyan Deep* by Shaikh Nabi.

Then came Surdas, Parmanand Das, Nandadas, Krishna Das, Chaturbhujdas, Kumbhadas, Govindaswami, Cheetaswami and his own son Vitthal Nath. The blind poet Surdas' 5,500 existing compositions are available as *Sursagar*. Meera Bai's padas or verses, written in a fine blend of Rajasthani and Brijhasha are enormously popular even today.

In early prose, the rise of British power and the inevitable social reaction affected literature, too. The focus shifted from religio-romantic poetry to the social, economic and political struggles of the people. An abundance of prose writing followed.

Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj (See People), wrote a historical work *Satyarth Prakash*. In the 19th century Bhartendu Harishchandra attempted prose in Khariboli and poetry in Brajhasha. He is best remembered for his story *Andher Nagari*, *Chaupat Raja*.

After Bhartendu's death, there followed the 'Dwivedi period', a blend of Khariboli and Brajhasha. Mahabeer

Prasad Dwivedi, an enthused supporter of correct language promoted prose writing through his magazine *Saraswati*.

In the modern era, poets like Jaishankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala,' Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Verma were the luminaries. Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar,' Balkrishna Sharma 'Navin,' Rameshwar Shukla 'Anchal,' Mohanlal Mahto and Viyogi Hari were the romantics. The third poetic trend was Marxist-Socialist in nature. The leading lights were Suman, Anchali, Nagarjun and others. In its latest form, Hindi verse is published as Nai Kavita, Vichar Kavita and Gita Kavita.

Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) revolutionised fiction writing with his novels of social realism. His real name was Dhanpat Rai but he wrote in Urdu under the name Nawab Rai. All his Hindi works were, however, published under his pen name, 'Premchand'. His first collection of short stories, *Soz-i-Watan*, came out in 1907. Some of his best-known novels are *Godan*, *Nirmala*, *Seva Sadan* and *Rang Bhumi*. He edited magazines like *Maryada* and *Jagran*. He also started his own magazine, *Hansa*. Munshi Premchand is known as Upanyas Samrat or the 'father of Hindi fiction' for he gave the Hindi novel a definite shape. Other well-known writers were Jainendra Kumar, Vrindavanlal Verma, Yashpal and Mahadevi Verma. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and 'Agyeya' are remembered for their stylistic themes. Short story writers like Kamleshwar, Nirmal Verma, Mohan, Rajendra Yadav became the advocates of the Nai Kahani (new story) era. In drama, the earlier plays by Bhartendu and Jaishankar Prasad were mirrors of Indian culture, while contemporary themes attracted one-act play writers like Ram Kumar Verma, Udayshankar Bhatt and Jagdish Chandra Mathur. National School of Drama has pioneered the production of modern Hindi plays, notably under Ebrahim Alkazi's direction.

INDO-ANGLIAN

Seen against 5,000 years of history, the last 300 of active European involvement were a useful literary catalyst in modernising aspects of India. In literature, they not only brought new strains but also threw up a new trend: Indians writing in English.

The earliest specimen is the first English newspaper printed in India, *Hickey's Bengal Gazette* (1780) and the first known tract was Cavally Venkata Boriah's dissertation on the Jains (1801). But early Indian

writers who chose to work in English borrowed only the medium: the themes remained obstinately Indian, drawing from Sanskrit epics and old traditions of romance, chivalry, oppression and philosophy. Poets like Henry Derozio wrote on Sati (widow-burning) in a poem called *The Faquir of Jhungheera*. Influenced by the Romantics, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a Bengali Christian convert, wrote a Miltonian epic in Bengali (*Meghnad Badh Kavya*) or Ravana's son, Indrajit; and a Byronic English ballad *Captive Ladies* (1847) on the romance of the Hindu king of Delhi, Prithviraj Chauhan and the princess Samyukta.

Bengal, Madras and Maharashtra spawned a host of other writers who reached a wider audience using English. Writers like Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-1884), Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), K.T. Telang (1850-1893), N.G. Chandavarkar (1855-1923) and Swami Vivekananda (See People) marked the turn of the century, the last using English to spread the message of Vedanta in America.

Toru Dutt, (1856-77) a young, consumptive poet wrote sensitively in English and French of her experiences abroad (*A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*) and the Indian legends of Savitri, Prahlada, Dhruva and Ekalavya. The historical was explored in works like V. Kanakasabesan's *Tamils 1800 Years Ago* and philosophy in *Rambles in Vedanta* by a yogi, B. R. Rajan Iyer.

The Indian novel in English began in 1864 with *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Early 20th century writers like Manmohan Ghosh and Sri Aurobindo wrote prodigiously in verse. Ghosh's major works are *Songs in Love and Death* (1926), *Slayer*, *Nala-Damayanti* (See Myths and Legends) and *Adam Alarmed in Paradise*, while poet-philosopher Aurobindo wrote narrative poems, political tracts. His magnum opus was a 24,000 line mystical epic Savitri (See Sages and Saints). Indian writing in English won international acclaim when Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1912 (See People). His experiments in poetry, prose and drama inspired a new generation of Indian writers.

A notable contemporary, Sarojini Naidu (See People) fired by the nationalism sweeping India, wrote delicately and skilfully of Indian everyday life and love in collections like *The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Broken Wing*, *The Bird of Time* and *The Temple*.

The Indo-Anglian scene of the last 50 years is fairly crowded with a range of writers and poets. The novel seems particularly in use as a form. Some of the best known 'moderns' are R.K. Narayan (*Malgudi Days*, *Swami and Friends*, *The English Teacher*). Several of his books have been successfully filmed or televised and are often illustrated by his cartoonist brother R.K. Laxman. Narayan deals mainly with life in south India's small towns. Manohar Mulgaonkar wrote excellent historical novels like *A Bend in the Ganges* and *Princes* and *The Devil's Wind*, which gave an Indian view of the Revolt of 1857. Khushwant Singh focused on the trauma of partition (1947) in *Train to Pakistan*, while Nayantara Sehgal, Nehru's niece, wrote about contemporary themes in novels like *Prison and Chocolate Cake*. Kamala Markandeya's *Nectar in a Sieve* dealt sensitively with a rural woman's life, and Anita Desai writes elegantly of urban India's angst.

Of the poets, Kamala Das is refreshingly frank and personal, Nissim Ezekiel gently ridicules urban pretensions, Jayanta Mahapatra expresses deep contemporary concerns through focusing on nature and A.K. Ramanujan, a linguist and scholar is remembered for *Speaking of Shiva*. Painter Gieve Patel writes sensitively of nature.

The late eighties and early nineties have seen a fresh spurt of energy in the Indo-Anglian stream with books like the internationally successful novel-poem, *The Golden Gate* by Vikram Seth, Amitava Ghose's *Circle of Reason*, Firdaus Kanga's *Trying to Grow* (on being Parsi and disabled) and Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*.

KANNADA

A Dravidian language. The earliest evidence is in 5th century inscriptions in the Brahmi script and thereafter the earliest literature is all Jaina. Srivijaya, a Jaina poet, c. 860 AD at the court of the Rashtrakuta king, Nripatunga Amogavarsha, wrote the *Kaviraja Marga*, a book on poetics. It is based on Dandin's Sanskrit work, *Kavya-darsha*. The book also throws light on contemporary Kannada language.

The next important poet is Pampa, a Jaina soldier, who commanded the forces of Arikesari Chalukya II. He wrote a religious tract, on the first Jain Tirthankara, called the *Adi Purana* and a secular work, *Pampa Bharata* on the epic hero Arjuna (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata).

Pampa's contemporary, Ponna, a Rashtrakuta court poet wrote a Jaina epic, the *Shanti Purana*, while more Jaina literature incorporating the Sanskrit epics was penned by Chamundaraya, soldier-poet, army commander of King Rachamalla (947 - 984 AD) who installed the massive statue of Gomatesvara at Sravanabelagola (modern Karnataka. See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Jaina Shrines). *Vadaradbane* (920 AD) on the lives of 19 Jaina ascetics constitutes the earliest Kannada prose. Ranna, son of a banglemaker from Bijapur, was another Jaina who became a court poet and author of *Ajitapurana*, ranked with Pampa and Ponna as one of Kannada's 'Ratnatraya' or trifaceted jewel.

The first love poem in Kannada by Nagavama was a translation from Sanskrit while Kanakadasa, a 15th century Vaishnava mendicant singer from Dharwar and a contemporary of Purandaradasa (See Performing Arts: Music) wrote devotional songs. His *Prabandha Kavya* blends Sanskrit and Kannada.

More devotional verse followed with the vachanas of the 12th century Viralingayatas or Shaiva poets, of whom the best-known were Dasimayya, Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Mahadevi Akka. The earliest, Devara Dasimayya was a disciple of the Shaivite ascetic Ramanuja. He and other vachana poets wrote pithy, rhythmic verse condemning social evils and extolling their personal vision of god in a form that was neither prose nor verse and so became uniquely called vachanas or sayings.

Modern Kannada writing in the 20th century takes off with the Pragatisheel Movement or Progressive Movement, founded by A. N. Krishna Rao. Literature was transformed into an instrument of social charge, attacking old social evils like dowry, caste and illiteracy. Rural life in all its hardship was depicted with great detail in prose, short story, novel and in poetry. Between 1920 and 1945, several Kannada writers were awarded the Jnanpith (India's highest literary honour): K. V. Kutapah, D. R. Bendre, Shivaram Karanth and Masti Venkatesa Iyengar. Girish Karnad, playwright and film maker (*Hayavadana*, *Raktakalyan*) is nationally known, while presently two potent forces in Kannada literature – Dalit and Bandavya writing – voice the concerns of the socially and economically oppressed.

KASHMIRI

The first evidence of literature is the *Chamcharya Padas* (10th and 11th centuries) in Abhinava Gupta's book on *Kashmiri Shaiva Darshana*. Since these padas constitute the basics of Sahajayana Buddhist thought, it is possible that the progenitors of this language were Buddhists. From the very beginning the language has been used by hermits and Sufis. The 14th century poetess Lal Ded wrote *Vakh*. Nund Rishi or Nuruddin (1337-1442) a younger contemporary of Lal Ded wrote *Shruk* verses, a mystic Kashmiri version of shlokas, propagating universal brotherhood, fraternity, compassion, non-violence and tolerance. The *Vakh* poetry tradition flourished alongside and continues even today with the Shaiva poets of Kashmir. Avtar Bhatt's epic *Banasurabadh Katha* (15th century) is the first of its kind, throwing light on the elite, if archaic, language of the age.

Poetess Habba Khatoon is remembered for her exquisite love poems in and around 1604. Khwaja Habibullah Nausahri, Mirza Akmal-ud-din and Arnimal followed her trend. Although Saheb Kaul (1629-82) belongs to this period, his verse shows a difference. His *Zanmacharit* is a philosophical treatise, while Rupa Bhawani continued the *Vakh*, glowing with spiritual fervour.

The 18th century saw the introduction of the 'mashair' or narrative poems in literature with the works of Mumin Saab, followed by Mahmud Gami, Shah Qalandar, Nazim and Azizullah Haggami. The masterpiece is Maqbul Shah Kralwari's *Gulrez* where the plot is Persian, but its rendering is original. Waliullah Mattu's mashair *Himalis* based on a local legend.

After a lull of 400 years, following the death of Nund Rishi, mystic poetry or "Sufi Shairi", blending Vedantic and Shaiva, Sahajayana, Shunyavada (scientific) and Islamic thought, came into being. Some poets of this genre were Rehman Dar, Rahim Saab, Naima Saab, Shah Qalandar, Shams Faqir and Samad Mir. Other forms, like romantic poetry by Rusool Mir and Bhakti poetry by Prakash Ram, Parmananda and Bulbul Nagami continued. Krishan Razdan went on to specialise in bhajans and Zinda Kaul enriched Bhakti poetry after him. 'Naat' and 'Rubai' were other genres explored in Kashmiri at the turn of the century.

Kashmiri prose, which began with a translation of the *Bible* by the Serampore Missionary Press, continued into articles on *Health and Hygiene* by S.K. Toshakhani (1895-81) and his *Kamala* which

now exists only in parts.

The first drama, by Nandlal Kaul, was *Satch Kahvat* on the episode of Raja Harishchandra (See Myths and Legends). Works by T.C. Bismil (1904-48), Ghulam Naki Dilsoz and Aga Hashar followed.

Akhtar Mohiuddin's wrote the first anthology of stories and Amil Kamil's *Gatimanzi Gash* the first novel. Today Ghulam Nabi Gauhar, Bansi Nirdosh (*Akh Dour*) have continued the tradition. Kashmiri is now written in the Urdu script though originally it was in an ancient script called 'Sharada.'

MAITHILI

Maithili, the vernacular of the east, emerged as valid literature with Jyotinteshwara's poem, *Varnaratnakara* describing contemporary court life. The great poet Vidyapati (1360-1448) is the genius of this literature. His only drama *Dhurta-Samagama* was a kirtan-based innovation dealing with the Radha-Krishna theme. His *Hara-Gauri* songs were even more popular.

The *Kirtania Natak* trend of Maithili found continuation in the works of Umapati and Ramapati. Later the language flourished in Nepal, and Assam. Modern Maithili grew in calibre after Independence. Chanda Jha (1880-1920) had first marked this awakening through works in prose. A revolutionary breakaway was introduced by the works of Harimohan Jha (1908-84) and Vidyanath Mishra Yatri, which dealt with the scourge of social evils and superstition. Today, modern Maithili, which developed after 1960, reflects a number of contemporary concerns and Raj Kamal (1929-67) was among its best-known exponents.

MALAYALAM

Dravidian language spoken in Kerala has a shared literary tradition with Tamil until the 14th century. It was later heavily influenced by Sanskrit when the local priestly class (Namboodiris) learnt Sanskrit. Folk literature was another major influence and the dominant religious theme was the life of Krishna and the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

As with other regional literature, the first major works are all translations of religious Sanskrit texts. Cherusseri Namboodiri (15th century) wrote a Malayalam version of the Sanskrit *Bhagavata Purana* (*Krishna Gatha*) using easily understood local metres. Punam, court poet to the zamorin of Kozhikode (Calicut) in the 16th century used the local Champu metre and

his preference for Malayalam over Sanskrit in his *Ramayana Champu* earned him the derogatory title Arakavi (half poet).

Another important writer of Champus was Mazhamangalam Namboodiri, who wrote the *Naishadham Champu* (See Myths and Legends: Nala Damayanti), *Raja Ratnavaliyam*, *Kodiya Virabam* and *Banayudham*.

But the literary benchmark of the 16th century was the work of Ezhuthachhan, a saint-poet of humble origin from Kozhikode whose *Adhyatma Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are to Malayalam what Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* was to Hindi: an enduring bridge between classical Sanskrit and the folk poetry of the ordinary people. Understandably, Ezhuthachhan had to face Brahminical hostility but his *Kilipattu* (parrot songs), styled on everyday speech are highly musical portions of his epics that justify his title 'Ezhuthachhan' or 'Father of Writing' (See Tamil – Subramania Bharati).

Kanchan Nambiar was the next landmark in Malayalam literature with his dance drama Ottan Thullal (See Performing Arts: Dance). Performed by the underprivileged classes, these 64 verse plays based on the Sanskrit epics initiated satires on local customs and the ills of society and were extremely popular.

Athakatha, the literature of the Kathakali dance drama developed in the 18th century (See Performing Arts: Dance – Kathakali) were verse commentaries sung by a chorus seated behind the main actors. Most 18th century writers did not consider themselves complete litterateurs without attempting Kathakali literature.

The advent of western education in Kerala through Christian missionaries sparked various reactions. Some fell back on the Sanskrit tradition, like 'Kerala Varma' (1854-1914), a prince who wrote *Mayura Sandesham* (The Peacock Messenger) on the lines of Kalidasa's Sanskrit play, *Meghadoota*. He also translated other Sanskrit classics and was an energetic leader of the 'Bhasha Poshini Sabha' for the development of the Malayalam language.

A father and son duo, Achhan Namboodiri and Mohan Namboodiri emerged as the first 'modern' writers. Called the Venmani poets, they were Sanskrit scholars who wrote poems in everyday speech. The son is specially known for his description of the Puram festival at Trichur in *Puraprabandham* (See Festivals) and *Ambopadesham* in which a courtesan gives her daughter professional advice.

The novel in Malayalam was pion-

eerred as a vehicle for social realism by Chandu Menon Oyyarathu (1847-1900) with *Indulekha*, while the first Malayalam grammar was written by Rajaraja Varma. He is also honoured as a literary critic, essayist, Sanskrit translator and poet, author of *Malaya Vilasam*, a hymn to the Sahyadri ranges.

Modern drama took off with the burlesque of P. Ramakurup and the non-mythological secular plays of Kodunganallur Kochunni Tampuran. Historical fiction was the hallmark of C.V. Raman Pillai in novels like *Martanda Varma*, *Dharma Raja* and *Rama Raja Bahadur*. Kumaran Asan launched a romantic movement, which inspired popular poets, like Vallathol Narayana Menon (1878-1958), the founder of Kerala Kalamandalam (a centre for the revival of Kerala's performing arts), and Ulloor Parameshwara Iyer (1877-1947) who popularised modern poetry. This tradition continued, leading to 'Mahakavi' G. Sankara Kurup's *Odakkuzhal*.

The late forties also yielded another crop of inspired writers and poets: Ayappa Panikkar, Kadamannitta and Satchidanandan. The latter half of this century has produced outstanding writers like Keshav Dev, Varkey, Vaikom Mohammed Basheer (*Mathilukkal*) and Thakkazhi Sivasankara Pillai (*Chemmeen*), whose works have been filmed, while serious dramatists like Kainikara Padmanabha Pillai write socio-political satires.

MANIPURI

Its formative years were associated with Lai-haraoba, the festival of the Meiteis (See Festivals). Popular songs for festivals like Ougri, Khencho, Anoirol and Lairemma paosa were included in a 17th century manuscript, *Panthoibi Khonkul*, portraying the love of a Meitei princess (Thoibi) for the chief of the Longmais (Khamba). This oral tradition was altered in the 18th century under king Pamheiba. The seven cantos of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were written with local colour by Angom Gopi. Alongside these, works on moral aphorisms, travelogues and poetic narratives were written. It led to writing no longer based on history but on the principle of good triumphing over evil and marked the beginning of fiction.

Thereafter the British advent in 1891 created a lull in literary activity. Modern literature began with Chaoba, Kamal and Angalhal. Kamal's novel *Madhabi*, Chaoba's *Labangalata* and Angalhal's

Jahera were popular. The first epic verse *Khamba Thoibi Seiring* by Angalhal is still read. World War II had its impact on this literature and a fresh crop of realistic work arose, describing moral disintegration, and social problems. Post-war drama enriched the Manipuri stage and the short story was introduced for the first time.

MARATHI

Developed from the Prakrit Maharashtra, with a pure Sanskrit vocabulary, as well as borrowings from Persian, Portuguese and English. The 'Punehri' form of Marathi centred in Pune is considered the most chaste. It is the only language written in the Devanagari script besides Sanskrit and Hindi, though 13th century Peshwa records were written in the Modi script.

The first known work is *Vivekasindhu* written in 1188 by Mukundaraj, an original composition that preaches Advaita Bhakti or devotion (See Philosophy). Thereafter six centuries of non-Vedic devotional literature follow, mainly of the Manubhava and Varkari cults. These poets preached non-violence and social justice through local stories and song forms like padas and abhangs. The main proponents were Namadeva (1270-1350), Dnyaneshwar (1275-1296), Eknath, Mukteshwar (17th century) and Tukaram (See Sages and Saints). The poems of these Bhakti poets live on in Marathi-speaking homes even today.

In the second half of the 17th century a form of heroic verse called Powada was composed by wandering shahir (ballad singers), who dramatized Shivaji's exploits in verse (See History: Chronology). During Peshwa rule (See History: Dynasties), a folk genre of erotic songs Laavni, flourished. Its chief composers were Honaji Bala, Prabhakara, Sagar Bhau and Parashurama.

Prose chronicles of 17th century kings, called Bakhars are a rich source of historical record, like Sabhasadhi Bakhar (1697) and Ajna Patra (1718). The first Marathi novel was published in 1857: Baba Padmanji's *Yamuna Paryatana*, on the lines of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Romantic historicals flourished, with Hari Narayan Apte as a leading writer of historical and social novels from 1885 onwards, serialised in his own magazine, *Karamuk*. He specialised in portraying women characters. One of his best known works is *Pan Lakshat Kon Ghetot* (1893).

The best-known stream of Marathi literature is drama. In 1823, *Thorle Madhar Rao Peshue*, the first modern Indian play,

was commissioned by the Raja of Sangli. Vishnudas Bhavé pioneered the translations of Sanskrit plays. B.P. Kirloskar's *Shakuntala* and *Saubhadra* were very popular. A rich blend of classical music and dialogue gave rise to musical plays called Natya Sangeet, which were later adopted by Tamil, Telugu and Kannada theatre.

Humorists like Atre, social realists like P.L. Deshpande and Vijay Tendulkar (*Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Ghasiram Kotwal*) wrote bluntly of social tensions and scathing historical satires and their works are known and translated nationally.¹

ORIYA

Born of the Apabhramsa Magadhi, about 1200 years ago, it existed in oral tradition as folk songs, proverbs and riddles, but a script emerged only by the mid-13th century. Its oldest extant literary work is in palm-leaf, the prose chronicles of the Jagannath Temple at Puri, called the *Mada-la Panji* (Book of the Drum), c. 1400 AD.

Kesavakoili by Makaranda Dasa is a description of Yashoda's grief when Krishna left for Mathura and is the earliest poetic work from this period. It is a 'chautisa' (34 lines) in which each line begins with an Oriya consonant. The early works are also mytho-historical, notably, Vatsa Dasa's *Kalasa* on the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, in which the god is depicted as an ordinary cultivator, fond of drugs. It is more amusing than reverential. Sarala Dasa's *Mababharata*, however, is the first major work in Oriya, based on the Sanskrit original but with regional variations that endure today as distinct myths and legends. His *Bilanka Ramayana* and *Chandi-Purana* extol the Shiva-Shakti cult. Religion was the main theme of Oriya literature till around 1650.

Jagannatha Dasa (*Bhagavata*) and Yashokanta Dasa introduced and incorporated Sanskrit epics, philosophy and religious tenets into Oriya. The kavyas (narrative verse) of this period however, focused more on poetic beauty than religious messages—especially *Parimata*, by Narsingh Sena, *Ushabhilasha* by Shankara Dasa, *Rahasya Manjarib* by Deva Durlabh, *Rukmini-bibaba* by Kartik Sena and *Sasisena* by Pratapa Raya. In its later 'middle' period (1650-1866), kavyas completely dominated Oriya literature, especially the erotic nuances of the Radha Krishna theme. Krishna-lila kavyas were unabashedly secular as were the romances of 'Kavi-Samrat' (poet-emperor)

Upendra Bhanj who wrote *Kotibrah-manda Sundari*, *Lavanyavati* and *Baide-bisha Vilash*. His many love lyrics (chau-pai) are choreographed by Odissi dancers even today. Other kavya poets of interest are Abhimanyu Samhataasinghara (*Bidaghdha Chintamani* on Radha-Krishna), 'Kavisurya' (Sun of Poets) Baladev Rath (whose *Kishora-Chandranana* uses the champu form of short poems, arranged alphabetically) and Gopalakrishna, whose Krishnapadavalis are still sung.

Contemporary events find spirited expression in the ballad *Kanchi Kaveri* by Purushottama Dasa on a regional conflict. His *Samara-Taranga* is a first-hand account of a battle fought by peasant militia, while a unique poem *Stuti Chintamani* by an unlettered Kandha tribal, Bhima Bhoi, is distinct for its lyrical beauty. An important prose work of this period is a collection of Oriya tales by Badajena, called *Chature Vinoda*.

Modern Oriya literature takes off with the influx of new ideas after the British conquest of Orissa in 1803. Several new areas were created by writers like Fakirmohan Senapati (1843-1918) whose *Chaman Athaguntha* on the oppressed, introduced social realism. He wrote *Lachama*, a historical novel and pioneered the short story with works like *Revati* and *Randipua Ananta*. Radhanath Rai, considered the father of modern Oriya verse, wrote *Chilika*, a poem extolling nature, while his unfinished *Mabayatra* on the Pandavas' ascent to heaven, is in blank verse. Madhusudan Rao, Gangadhare Meher, Chintamani Mohanti, Padmacharan Patnaik and Aparna Patnaik were other early 'modern' poets while Nandkishore Bal wrote colloquial ballads on rural Orissa in *Palli Chitra*, earning the label 'Pallikavi.'

Drama meanwhile developed on independent lines. The earliest known poetic plays were called Surangas and Lila Natyas. But modern drama harks back to Jagmohan Lala's *Babaji* (1877). Ramashankar Rai wrote a dozen plays drawn from Sanskrit and English, of which *Kanchi-Kaveri* written in 1880 (borrowing Purushottama Dasa's title) is now a classic. Satirical prosewriters like Gopalchandra Praharaj (1864-1946) wrote acidly funny tracts on the customs of the times in *Bhagavata Tungire Sandhya* and *Bai Mohani Pani*. He also compiled a seven volume encyclopaedia, *Bhasha Kosha*.

A new genre of socially committed writing was fostered as the 'Satyabadi' (truthful) school by the educationist Pandit Gopabandhu Das, who attracted poets and dramatists like Nilakanta Das and

Godavarish Mishra to his journal *Satyabadi*. The latter also wrote several popular historical plays. Gopabandhu himself wrote poetry, especially the stirring *Dharmapada* while in Hazaribagh jail during the struggle for Independence. Modern concerns also crop up in the political novels of Harekrishna Mahatab (*Tritiya Parva*) and Ramprasad Singh, in the short stories of Ananta Panda, and in plays like *Bhata* by Kavichandra Kalicharan Patnaik (on the 1942-1943 famine) that ran continuously for 108 nights. Some of the finest post-Independence writing is to be found in publications like *Pandulipi*, *Agami Kali*, and *Panchajanya*, attracting writers like Kishori Charan Das, Sachitananda Rautrai, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and Nityananda Mohapatra.

PALI

A predominant language in the early centuries of the millennium, it was primarily used for Buddhist canonical writing comprising the 'Tripitaka' or 'three baskets.' The non-canonical works are commentaries, historical works and technical treatises. Besides these works, there is also epigraphical literature.

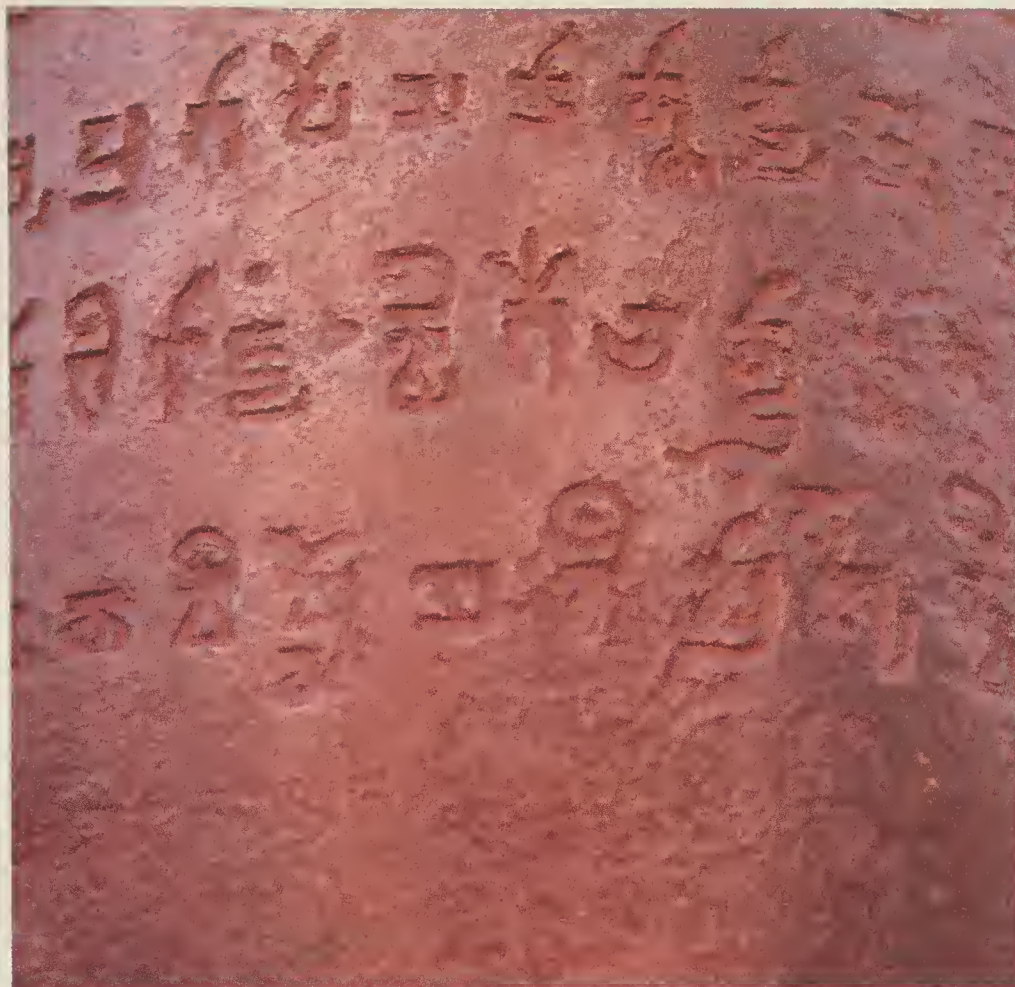
Vinaya Pitaka is the chief canon of sacred Buddhist literature, a part of the *Tipitaka*, containing regulations about the daily life of monks and nuns. It consists of four parts:

Pattimokha is the nucleus of the Vinaya. According to the Buddha's chief disciple Ananda, these rules were read at penitential assemblies twice each month, on new and full moon days. It has ten sections and 227 rules in all.

Sutta Vibhaga is a commentary on the Vinaya. It consists of sections dealing with particular transgressions and the order of their seriousness. It is of historical interest to law students as it contains fine distinctions between degrees of crime.

Khandakas, a continuation of the *Sutta Vibhaga*, tells of the formation of the Sangha or community of Buddhist clergy, prescribing rules of admission, mode of life, legal proceedings and restoration of the order of the Sangha. The smaller section of this commentary deals with the Buddha's life and its final section lays down rules of the Order of the Nuns.

These tracts also contain accounts of the two important Buddhist assemblies at Rajgriha and Vaishali. *Parivara* is the last part of the *Vinaya*. It was probably the work of a Sinhalese monk and is in question-answer form, summarising the



Brahmi script on the Ashoka Pillar, Delhi

three other parts of the Vinaya.

Sutta Pitaka is the second canon of Buddhist literature, part of the three part *Tipitaka* containing the quintessence of Buddhism in prose and verse. It consists of five *Nikayas* or collections of the Buddha's speeches and dialogues, with his chief disciples and their followers. It has five sub-sections beginning with *Deergha Nikaya* or collection of long sermons and 34 suttas or prefaces in which ethical questions, heretical doctrines, social controversies are recorded. Each sutta has a short preface explaining the occasion on which the Buddha delivered it. The most important is the *Samanaphala Sutta* on the views of non-Buddhist teachers and founders of other sects.

Sutta 16, the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* or discourse on Nirvana is a continuous record of the latter part of the Buddha's life, his last speeches, his death and funeral ceremonies.

The *Majjhima Nikaya* is a collection of 152 medium length suttas, dealing with points of religion, including the Four Noble Truths, the truth of Nirvana (enlightenment) and various types of meditation (See Religion: Buddhism). It also throws light on various forms of asceticism and

the relationship between Buddhist, Jain and Brahminical ideas and men.

Samyutta Nikaya consisting of 56 sections of 2,889 suttas deals with doctrine, its principal branches, classes of gods, demons and men and some prominent personalities. Its most important sutta contains the first sermon of the Buddha. The 56 *Samsuttas* (groups) contain riddles addressed to the Buddha which he answers. It reveals the Buddha's fund of good sense, readiness to accommodate enquiry, humour, intuition, catholicity and great compassion.

Anguttara, divided into 11 sections, emphasizes doctrinal points.

Khuddaka Nikaya, written mainly in verse, comprising 15 texts of short suttas, canons and solemn sayings. Stories of divine places, sufferings of the ghosts of men, poems by Buddhist monks and nuns, stories about the previous lives of Buddha and deeds of self-sacrifice.

A non-canonical work, *Netti Prakarna* was written by a disciple of the Buddha and means 'a book of guidance.' The earliest work to systematically present Buddhist teachings, its opening section is the *Sangrahavara*, followed by the *Vibhaga-*

vara. A commentary on this work was written in the 5th century AD by Dhammapala (See Religion: Buddhism).

Petakopadesa is a set of introductions to students of the *Tipitaka* by a famous Buddhist disciple. It declares the Four Noble Truths to be the central theme of Buddhism. In Burmese thought the book is considered canonical and was probably written at the beginning of the Christian era.

Milinda Panha may be compared to the Dialogues of Plato. It is a dialogue between the Greek ruler Milinda (Menander) who ruled Greek territory in India in the 1st century BC and the Buddhist monk Thera Nagasena. It contains seven books with parables that explain why man is responsible for his actions. In books II and III it discusses Buddhist ethics and psychology. Book IV has canonical texts. Book V has allusions to tradition and quotations. The language is elegant, and clearly ahead of the speeches in the *Sutta Pitaka*.

Jatakatha Vannana is the Pali commentary by Buddhaghosa, on the *Jatakas* – Buddhist parables and stories of the Buddha's previous lives (See Religion: Buddhism – Buddhaghosa) containing 547 stories, each of which has a canonical section, prose narrative and contemporary stories. The work is valuable not only as literature but for the historical insight it provides into life in India between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD.

Diparamsa/Mahavamsa, an epic poem deals with the history of Sri Lanka (325-352 AD). Buddhaghosa quotes freely from it. It recounts three of Buddha's visits and gives an account of the first two Buddhist councils and schools which arose thereafter. It describes King Ashoka's reign (See History) during the time his son Mahinda went to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism with the help of King Devanampiyatissa of Sri Lanka. Composed in the middle of the 4th century AD, the *Diparamsa* closes with an account of King Mahasena's reign. A coherent, refined version of this work is the *Mahavamsa*.

Chullavamsa, a supplement to *Mahavamsa* was composed by different persons at different periods. It was begun by Thera Dhammakitti, whose fame spread from Burma to Sri Lanka in the 13th century during the great king Parakramabahu's reign. It begins with the reign of king Mahasena's son Sirimeghavanna and ends with Sirivikkama Rajasiha, with accounts of about a 100 kings in between this period.

Minor histories These mainly deal with the history of Sri Lanka and the tooth relic of the Buddha (*Dathavamsa*). The third Buddhist Council in Sri Lanka is written in the *Sasanavamsa*, which contains the history of Buddhism in Burma and India. *Mahabodhavamsa* is about the Bo or Pipal tree (See Nature – Trees and Plants) in Anuradhapura. *Gandhavamsa* deals with the history of Pali books in Sri Lanka and Burma. Others deal with the stupas built over the hair relic of Buddha (*Chhakeshabhatuvamsa*), mansions for religious rites (*Hathavangala-viharavamsa*) and biographies of famous commentators (*Budbhaghosapatti*).

Kassapa, written in 142 verses in the 11th century, giving a detailed account of the future Buddha, Maitreya and his contemporary Chakravartin Sankha. Several versions exist. One of these, written partly in prose, is a dialogue between the Buddha and a disciple Sariputta on the decadence and final extinction of Buddhism, its influence and literature. The other version, all in prose, describes ten future Buddhas. The third, all in verse, gives an account of the future Buddhas only. This future Buddha, to be born in a Brahmin family, will apparently renounce the world and on reaching enlightenment, set in motion the wheel of law.

Tela Katha Gatha or 'Stanzas of the Oil Cauldron,' in 89 verses describes the thoughts of the monk Mahthera. He was thrown into a cauldron of hot oil as punishment for a suspected illicit relationship with the queen of Kalyani. Later, a vihara (rest house) was built on the spot. The *Mahavamsa* relates this tale and speaks of Thera being cast into the sea. Another work, *Rasavahini* gives further details of it along with a section on the cardinal teachings of Buddhism and Buddhist metaphysics.

PRAKRIT

The second most important language of the middle Indo-Aryan group with various dialects. Old Prakrit is called Pali, middle Prakrit comprises the three dialects Sauraseni, Magadhi and Maharashtri and later Prakrit is 'Apabhramsa,' of which a division is Paisachi. It has both canonical and non-canonical works of which the former is Jaina. The non-canonical works consist of narrative, lyrical and dialectic poetry, short stories, dramas, lexicons, geography, cosmogony, astronomy, philosophy, ethics and inscriptions.

Satasai is a celebrated Prakrit anthology of 700 stanzas, culled from different

works. It draws scenes from rural life, the seasons and realistic sketches. The chief sentiment is erotic, together with descriptions of ceremonies and linked conventions. Romantic situations are described in detail. Radha, important in Vaishnavism, is mentioned here for the first time. The existence of this anthology presupposes the existence of a mass of secular literature. The compendium has been imitated in Sanskrit and Hindi, but stands unrivalled in its original form.

Padma Charita is the *Ramayana* story from the Jaina viewpoint by Svayambhudeva, combining 90 sandhis or sets in five khandas (sections) with about 12,000 shlokas (couplets). It was left incomplete by him but finished by his son Tribhuvana Svayambhu. Sita is portrayed as the daughter of Ravana and Mandodari and not of Janaka. As she was destined to ruin her father, Mandodari, her mother, had abandoned her at Mithila where she was picked up by Janaka. Sage Narada instigated Ravana into abducting Sita. Mandodari recognised Sita and suppressed this fact from Ravana. Rama is the last of the nine Baladevas. The work is replete with descriptions of nature and feminine charm. The poetry deals with several kinds of 'rasa' (sentiment).

Kathanakas were short stories written between the 10th and 12th centuries. Of these, the *Kalakacharya Kathanaka* is the best known. It describes in prose and verse the initiation of Prince Kalaka into Jainism and his rise to the highest rank of monkhood.

Uvasaggahara Stotra in five verses is the earliest and most celebrated work eulogising Parsvanatha. Most of these poems were written around the 10th and 11th centuries, in honour of the Tirthankaras (See Religion: Jainism).

Mahavira Charita by Gunachandragiri, composed in 1082 narrates the life of Mahavira on the basis of many legends. Written in grammatically chaste language, it employs various poetic metres as well as 50 Aprabhamsa verses.

Kumarapala Charita an account of the Chalukyan King Kumarapala (See History: Dynasties) by Hemachandra is written in both Sanskrit and Prakrit and is a work of history. It also illustrates rules of grammar. The last two chapters are in Prakrit dialects and form a valuable account of the history of the Chalukyas of Gujarat.

Surasundari Charita by Dhanesvara is a long romantic poem written in 1038 describing in easy style, the love affairs of a Vidyadhar chief.

Harivamsa-Purana, the Jaina adaptation of the *Mahabharata* in 66 cantos (sections) by Jinasena changes the traditional text somewhat. The Pandavas become ascetics and attain Nirvana finally. The author converted the Rashtrakuta king, Amogavarsha to Jainism. He also wrote *Parsvabhudaya*, describing the story of Parsvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankara (See Religion: Jainism) and the famous commentary, *Jayadhavala*. His poetry is often compared to Kalidasa's.

PUNJABI

Early Punjabi literature is closely identified with Sikh scriptures (See Religion: Sikhism). The language converges with Hindi in areas like Delhi and Himachal Pradesh and is characterised by tones (if a word is pronounced differently, the meaning changes). A rich tradition of folk songs and Persian-derived romances coloured the medieval period of Punjabi literature, the best-known being the love stories of *Heer Ranjha* and *Sohni Mahiwal*. A form of lyrical singing came to be known as *Heer* while *Asa-di-var* formed a genre of devotional songs (See Performing Arts: Music). The influence of Sindhi, Urdu and Sanskrit mingled curiously.

The 'renaissance' era began with the Singh Sabha Movement that aimed to establish a Sikh identity by exclusively using Punjabi as a cultural vehicle. The best known literary figure in it was Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957) whose historical romances *Sundari* and *Bijan Singh* and his weekly, *Khalsa Samachar* mark the start of modern Punjabi prose. The story of the Sikh struggle against Mughal rule was recreated in the three-part historical novel, *Satvant Kaur* and the later work *Baba Nandh Singh*. Sikh feudal society, specially the middle classes, found a voice in the writing of Charan Singh 'Shahid' and Bhai Mohan Singh. Bhai Vir Singh is also the father of modern verse, specially in his work *Rana Surat Singh*. The trend of writing short poems too was begun by him through poems like *Matak Hulare*, *Labran de haar*, *Bijlian de haar*, which drew upon Sufi ideas of man-woman relationships.

The Akali struggle, together with Congress and Communist forces, had its impact on poetry. Gurmukh Singh 'Musafir' (1899-1975) and Feroze Din 'Sharif' were two luminaries. The drama in Punjabi awakened with the play *Subhadra* (1924) by Ishvar Chandra Nanda. It contained Shakespearean and Punjabi folk elements on the plight of Subhadra who is harassed

by her mother-in-law and rescued by her brother, who marries her off to a class-mate.

Other less known works include *Var Ghar* and *Shanu Shab*. The Punjabi novel came about with Nanak Singh's *Chitti Labu* on the theme of oppression of women and its tragic aftermath. The same theme is repeated in *Phauladi Phul*. Others of this kind are *Kaghazan di Beri*, *Dhundle Parchaven* and *Jivan Sangran* (1950). Nanak Singh's prolific writing explored social themes in an idealist, protestant spirit. He wrote about 60 short stories, in addition to these novels. Gurbaksh Singh (b 1895) is the doyen of the progressive movement in Punjabi literature. He advocated liberalism in all aspects of life, including platonic relationships between the sexes. These are published in volumes like *Sanvin Pachadi Zindagi*, *Zindagi di Ras*, *Navan Shivala* and *Param Manush*.

Modern drama, given a boost by Harcharan Singh, was marked by a spate of religious plays which created a new upsurge in Sikh society. Sant Singh Sekhon and Balwant Gargi have shown considerable variety in their writing. Gargi's *Kanak di Bali* (1954) and the experimentalist *Dhuni di Agg* as well as the historical - *Sultana Razia* are well-known.

Harsaran Singh is a bold modernist among playwrights. The short story has taken shape in the works of Sujan Singh Sekhon, Kartar Singh Duggal, Kulwant Singh Virk, while Gulzar, S. Sandhu, Prem Khaunir and Dalip Kaur Tiwana are furthering the genre.

Gurbaksh Singh's short stories include *Anokhe te Ikalle*, *Bhabi Maina* and *Pritam di pebredar*.

Mohan Singh (1906-1978) a stage poet of the thirties whose works were published in *Save Pattar* (1936) contained the issues of his time like Freudian psycho-analysis and Marxism. His works include *Kasumbhara*, *Advote*, *Kach*, *Sach*, *Vadavela* and *Kvazan*. His *Jaya mir* uses the 'mir' in its Russian meaning 'peace.' Amrita Pritam (b 1919) began publishing juvenile verses under the title *Amrit Labran*. She was specially volatile in expounding the cause of the young woman, suppressed by orthodoxy. This feminist sentiment about the lot of woman was evident in *Patuer Gite*. The mass population transfer at Partition was written about in *Lamia Vatan* and *Sarghi Vela*. Her current poetic trend borders on existentialism, evident in *Ashoka Cheti*, *Nagmani* and *Kagaz te Kanvas*.

In poems, Harbhajan Singh and Prab-

jot Kaur stand out. The latter wrote *Pabbi*, *Vaddarshi Shisha* and *Chander Yug*. The works of Sohan Singh Misha broke ground in realism, with *Chairasta Dastak* and *Kach de Vastar*. Other names of note are Mohan Kumar, Shiv Kumar and Mohan Singh.

The novel shows progressive trends and definite realism in the works of writers like Surindra Singh Narula, Jaswant Singh Kalwal, Narender Pal Singh and Dalip Kaur Tiwana. An emerging and promising newcomer is Gurdial Singh while Kartar Singh Duggal also made his mark as a novelist and playwright.

SANSKRIT

Abhidana, a dictionary or vocabulary, of which there are many in India. Among of the oldest is *Abhidana Ratnamala* of Halayudha Bhatta, c. 7th century AD. One of the most detailed is the *Abhidana Chintamani* of Hemachandra, a celebrated Jain of the 13th century.

Adi-Sloka or 'the first verse.' Valmiki the author of the great epic, Ramayana is said to have discovered poetry spontaneously when he reproached a hunter for killing the male of a pair of curlews (krauncha).

Amarasinha (c. 3rd century AD) was the author of one of the oldest, most celebrated Sanskrit vocabularies. He was one of the nine gems of the court of Vikramaditya of Ujjaini (See History).

Amaru Shataka is a delightful collection of a hundred romantic stanzas written by king Amaruka who ruled over Kashmir in the 7th and 8th century AD. The belief is that when Amaruka died, the great Shankaracharya (See Sages and Saints) entered his body and revived him long enough to compose his lyrics. Once this was done, the sage left his body and the king died a second death.

Ashtadhyayi, or Eight Books is the well-known grammar by Panini, so called because it has eight adhyayas or sections. Each book has four padas or chapters and each chapter contains a number of sutras or aphorisms which express rules. There are 3996 sutras in all. The sutras of the *Ashtadhyayi* are not arranged as in a modern grammar by the parts of speech. Panini proceeds on the principle of tracing linguistic phenomena, like the prolonging of vowels and all the grammatical situations in which this occurs. He gives an accurate description of the language and does not build up his grammar on the basis of any pre-conceived theory. Almost all later Sanskrit grammarians have adopted

Panini as the standard.

Banabhatta was a master of Sanskrit prose. He authored the novels *Kadambari* and *Harsha Charita*, a biography of king Harshavardhana (606-647 AD) of Thaneswar. Both these works are written in complicated prose with long compounds. *Kadambari*, a romantic tale, became a generic name for a novel or long song.

Bharavi composed the epic (See Mahakavya) *Kiratarjuniyam* in 18 cantos. It is based on the story of the combat between Arjuna and Lord Shiva, related in the *Mahabharata* which ends in Arjuna receiving the Pashupata weapon he craves from Shiva. Bharavi expanded this theme into an elaborate art form.

Bhartrihari, 7th century poet and composer wrote a number of poems of a 100 stanzas each called *Shringara Shataka*, *Niti Shataka* and *Vairagya Shataka*. He is celebrated in legend as the elder brother of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain and is said to have renounced his kingdom to follow the Nathpanthi sect.

Bhasa wrote over a dozen plays. He lived before Kalidasa, between the 2nd and 3rd century AD and is remembered for his mastery of dramatic technique. His best known work is *Swapna Vasavadatta* in six acts based on the story collection, *Brihatkatha* by Gunadhyaya referred to in the *Mahabharata*.

The story goes that Prince Udayana after his marriage to Vasavadatta is deprived of a part of his kingdom by an enemy. His minister Yougandharayana devises a plan for its recovery by advising Udayana to marry Padmavati, the daughter of the Magadha king but Udayana declines. The minister conspires with Vasavadatta for the success of his scheme. He spreads the rumour that Vasavadatta has perished in a forest fire. Meanwhile she hides in Padmavati's quarters passing as the minister's sister in search of her lost husband.

Udayana agrees to marry Padmavati but is still in love with Vasavadatta. He remembers her in sleep and manages to get a glimpse of her in Padmavati's chamber. But he mistakes her for an apparition. The kingdom is restored to him with Magadhan help. A messenger comes to Padmavati with a picture of Udayana and his former queen and Padmavati learns that Vasavadatta is no sister of the minister.

Bhasa's last work is taken to be *Pratimanatika* derived from the *Ramayana*. It is in seven acts and derives its name from the pratima (statue) of King Dasharatha that was added to the hall at Ayodhya after

his death. In the form of an ensuing dialogue between the queen Kaikeyi and her son Bharata, Bhasa tries to exonerate Kaikeyi of the charge of self-interest that has been flung at her, through centuries. The entire sixth act is in this novel form (See Performing Arts: Theatre – Bhasa).

Bhavabhuti, the best known dramatist after Kalidasa wrote three principal plays between 700-730 AD, of which *Mahavira-Charita* in seven acts, describes the main story of the *Ramayana*, ending with the triumphant entry of Rama into Ayodhya. Bhavabhuti's second play, *Uttara Ramayana* deals with the latter portion of the *Ramayana*; the banishment of Sita and her reappearance as the mother of her twins, Lava and Kusha, ending with her final disappearance underground. This is the best of his plays noted for the artistic delineation of the 'karuna rasa' or compassion (See Performing Arts: Dance). The third play, *Malati Madhava* is the story of two young Buddhist pupils whom their teacher, the nun Kamandaki, wants to unite in marriage. The local king plans otherwise and after a series of incidents, the lovers are united, with the king's concurrence. The story is from the *Kathasarit Sagara* but developed and dramatised sensitively.

Dashakumara Charita or 'Tales of Ten Princes' by Dandin, in prose, a collection of exciting adventures that vividly portrayed the late 6th and early 7th centuries AD.

Gita Govinda or 'Songs of the Cowherd' were written by Jayadeva in the 12th century; a series of dramatic lyrics meant to be sung, describing through the love of Krishna and Radha a devotee's longing to be one with God. A unique dance text, it has been choreographed in all the major dance styles of India – Bharata Natyam, Odissi, Manipuri, Mohini Attam, Kathak and Kuchipudi (See Performing Arts: Dance). It is sung in both Hindustani and Carnatic modes and was the only text used in the Jagannath temple, Puri for Odissi (See Holy Places: Temples). It has been translated into more than 20 European languages and since the 16th century, about 200 translations have appeared in 14 Indian languages.

Kalidasa The best known dramatist in Sanskrit literature whose masterpiece *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* is lauded for its dramatic poetry. It is the earliest known Sanskrit drama relating the love of King Dushyanta for Shakuntala (daughter of sage Vishwamitra and the apsara Menaka), whom he first meets in the forest when he enters the hermitage of the sage Kanva.

The king falls in love with her at once, sends back the royal party and marries Shakuntala in secret ('gandharvam') before returning to his capital.

One day, the young bride, in her excitement neglects to serve the visiting ascetic Durvasa who curses her and says that she would forever be forgotten by her lover. A heavenly messenger meanwhile informs Kanva of Shakuntala's marriage and pregnancy and Kanva arranges to send her under escort to the king. But the king cannot recognise Shakuntala, since he is under Durvasa's curse. The royal priest takes pity on Shakuntala and offers to house her till her child is born.

Meanwhile a fisherman was found to have in his possession the very ring that Dushyanta had given to Shakuntala which had slipped off while she was bathing in the river on the way to the palace. Seeing the ring, the king remembers everything and is filled with remorse. After several mishaps, Dushyanta, Shakuntala and their son Bharata are reunited. Bharata indeed, is the emperor after whom India is named Bharata Varsha, the land of Bharata.

Kalidasa also wrote the *Vikramorvashiyam*, on the oldest known love story in India (mentioned in the *Rig Veda*), between Pururavas, a mortal king and Urvasi, a celestial nymph. He also composed a poetic cycle on the seasons called *Rtu Samhara*. The lyrical descriptions of nature in this work and in *Meghadoota* (The Cloud Messenger) inspired many writers in later centuries. Yet another Kalidasa classic, *Malavikagnimitram* on the love of a king for his court dancer, is remarkable for the exacting standard it lays down for an ideal dancer.

Kama Sutra, a unique work on the art of love written by Maharshi Vatsyayana in the early centuries of Christian era has seven instructive chapters on the erotic arts. It is regarded as the greatest classical work on the subject ever written and has deeply influenced various aspects of Indian art, literature and culture. Moreover it contains a detailed account of prevalent techniques in painting.

Kathasarit Sagara or the 'Ocean of Story,' including an earlier collection, the *Brihatkatha* (great story). Written in the 11th century in Kashmir by Somadeva in easy, elegant verse, it incorporates a vast body of folk literature.

Mahakavya or the 'great poem.' There are six such: *Raghuvamsa*, *Kumarasambhava*, *Meghadoota* (all by Kalidasa), *Kiratarjuniyam*, *Sishupalabodha* and *Naishada Charitra* (See Myths and Legends: Nala

Damayanti; Religion: Hinduism).

Panchatantra, lit. five treatises, is actually a book of instruction in 'niti' or right conduct for kings and statesmen, told through little stories, apparently composed by one Vishnu Sharman who was charged by the king to educate five foolish princes, within six months.

Other versions of these stories exist, notably a school 'reader' in Sanskrit, the *Hitopadesa*, composed by Narayana in 12th century Bengal.

Sriharsha¹ or Harshavardhana was the poet king of Thaneshwar (See History). He is believed to have authored two Sanskrit plays, *Ratnavali* on the popular love story of princess Vasavadatta and Nagananda, a story of supernatural snakes meant to synthesise the tenets of Hindus and Buddhists.

Sudraka (3rd-4th century) authored *Mrichhakatika* a social drama in ten acts. It is the love story of the Brahmin Charudatta and the courtesan Vasantasena, whom he ultimately marries. The drama takes its name from a toy earthen cart (mrichhakatika) which belongs to Charudatta's son. He cries for a golden cart instead. Moved to pity, Vasantasena gives away her gold ornaments to be made into a cart for him. Many tortuous complications later, the story ends happily.

Vishakadatta is the author of the enduring classic *Mudraraksasha* (The Minister's Signet Ring). The theme is the winning over of Rakshasa, the faithful minister of the fallen dynasty of the Nandas, by Chanakya, the witty Brahmin who engineered the defeat of the Nandas by his protegee Chandragupta Maurya. It is a drama of pure political intrigue, recreated successfully on modern stages (See History; Performing Arts: Theatre).

SINDHI

The language of a province now in Pakistan, which is spoken in India by Sindhis who migrated here after the formation of Pakistan, settling largely in Bombay, Delhi and Jaipur. Sind was the first place in the subcontinent to be invaded by Arabs, in 712 AD, and thereafter its literature and culture was highly coloured by Islam.

The earliest known Sindhi literature is in a verse form called gahu and in ballads, both panegyrics to the Sumra and Samma kings of the region (1050-1520 AD). From about 1520 to 1843 AD, mystic Sufi philosophy, influenced by Vedanta philosophy was in vogue. Poets of this period included Ruhal, whose message prevailed

in northern Sind and who settled in Kandri near Umarkot (where Akbar the Mughal was born). The saying "We saw god in Kandri," originates from the legend of Ruhai and spawned a poetic movement called Kandri verse, whose proponents were Murad Fakir, Shahu Fakir, Ghulam Ali Fakir and a love lyricist Darya Khan, who specialised in a lyric form called kafi.

Another medieval Sufi - Vedantist was Dalpat, who campaigned for communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims through his *Gyan Margi* (path of knowledge) poetry, written in the verse form. The cycle of seasons and tales of Sufis, especially the story of six blind men and the elephant are enduring pieces from this period.

The Sufi poet, Qazi Qazan (1465-1551) a contemporary of Surdas (See Sages and Saints) wrote the *Bayamul As-rifin*, on the lines of the Hindi doha (couplet), influenced by the wandering Bhakti poets who visited Sind.

In the late medjeval period Shah Abdul Karim (1537-1622) wrote 94 dohas in pure Sindhi, while Shah Inayatullah (1652-1713) wrote *Surud Ramkali*, a poem based on the Raga Ramkali. He wrote Bait and Kafi verse romances using fresh images and stories of pilgrimages to Puri, Konkan and Malabar. Abdul Rauf Bhatti Makhdum (1682-1762) wrote devout Muslim poetry, extolling the mercy of God, the beauty of nature and the life of the common folk. He composed the first Sindhi maluds (poems in praise of the Prophet).

But the greatest Sindhi poet was Shah Abdul Latif (1689-1752), also called Latif Bhitari or Bhitari Ghot. He was the grandson of Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri, the great Sufi. Latif was born in Hala Haveli in Hyderabad (Sind) but after his father's death he lived on a mound (Bhit), three to five km away. He died there and today his dargah is a place of pilgrimage.

TAMIL

The oldest living language in India, written originally in a script called Grantha, almost purely Dravidian. Its origins are distinguished by the existence of the Sangam, the only known literary assembly of the time. There were three Sangams between the 1st and 4th centuries AD. Of the first, believed to be convened by Shiva and attended by legendary sages, there is no trace. Of the second, only the early Tamil grammar, the *Tolkappiam* survives. The third Sangam is best known, with 200 - 500 poets as members - wandering bards who

assembled regularly at Madurai, the Pandyan capital, to set the conventions of the language.

About 2,000 poems exist from the third Sangam, classified into eight anthologies (*Ettu Togai*), divided into two types of poetry - 'internal' (agam), dealing with love and 'external' (puram), praising kings.

Besides the *Ettu Togai*, Sangam literature also contains the *Patbu Patu* (The Ten Songs), which are longer poems separately collected. A distinct feature of Tamil poetry is the initial rhyme or assonance, in which the first syllable or syllables of each couplet must rhyme - a device unknown to any Sanskrit or western language, which usually have end-rhymes. Kapilar, Avvaiyar (called the Tamil mother) and Paranar were three Sangam poets whose work is still known and taught.

Post - Sangam literature shows more Aryan influence, especially Jaina. Two moral texts from this age are particularly famous - the *Naladiyar* and Thiruvalluvar's *Thirukkural*, an enduring work by an inspired weaver. It had brief, metrical proverbs, full of sensible, practical advice.

By the 6th century, Aryan influence pervaded Tamil Nadu and Sanskrit literature began to influence Tamil, especially the kavyas (long poems). The earliest and still most revered of these is the *Silappadikaram* (The Jewelled Anklet), in a style very different from Sanskrit poetry. It tells of the ill-starred couple, Kovalan and Kannagi. The poem is attributed to Ilango Adigal, a grandson of the great Chola ruler Karikalan and its fiery heroine Kannagi is venerated even today.

A little later, *Manimekalai*, a sequel to *Silappadikaram*, appeared. It was attributed to a Buddhist writer, Sattanar. A third Tamil epic was the *Jivaka Chintamani*, by a Jaina, Tiruttakkadevar, on the exploits of a Jaina hero.

But of all northern themes, it is Kambar's *Ramayana*, 9th century, that is much more than a mere translation of Valmiki and endures as a loved classic in Tamil Nadu. Kambar frequently deviates from the original and offers different interpretations of key characters, notably Ravana.

The medieval age (10th to 11th century) is given to Bhakti poetry, particularly of the Shaiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars. Of the former, Manikkavachakar's *Thiruvachagam* (51 lyrical poems), Appar's and Sambandar's *Tevaram* (a vast collection of Shaiva hymns), Sundarar's poems, and the 4,000 poems of the 12

Vaishnava Alvars, collectively called the *Nalaiyara Divya Prabandham*, are eminent.

Colonial influence, in what became the Madras Presidency under the British, pushed Tamil literature into modern genres. The first Tamil novel, *Pratapa Mudaliar Charitram* was written in 1879 by Vedanayakam Pillai.

But it was Subramania Bharati (See People) who, at the start of this century, revolutionised Tamil literature with his vast output of poetry and song, fervently urging nationalism, dreaming wildly of a free India and using folk song forms. His *Kilipattu* (parrot songs) are taught in schools today.

Bharati became a model for successors like Bharati Dasan (*Pandiyan Parisu*, a romance in verse), Ramalingam Pillai, Desikavinayakam Pillai and lyricists like Kannadasan and Surata.

The last 50 years has seen the advancement of novel and short story writing. The best known, besides Vedanayakam Pillai are Natesa Shastry and B. Rajam Iyer.

'Kalki' is acknowledged as the father of the historical novel (like *Parthiban Kanavu*), while social and contemporary themes were explored in the works of writers like Jayakanthan, Akhilan, Lakshmi and Shivasankari.

Short stories became the forte of Kalki, Devar, Sundara Ramaswamy, Jayakanthan and K. Alagiriswamy. Satirists like 'Cho' Ramaswamy have written political plays like *Tugblak* and even founded a satirical magazine of the same name. Tamil magazines have played an important role in popularising the short story.

TELUGU

The first evidence of the language is found on rock inscriptions ordered by Dhananjaya Chola in 575 AD at Renadu. Other inscriptions are found in Cudappah district. The first known poet is Nannaya, patronized by the Vengi king, Rajaraja Narendra, who translated part of the *Mahabharata* and brought order into the evolving language.

Then followed a flood of translation right down to the 14th century. Tikkana (12th century) and Errapragada (14th century) form a sort of triumvirate with Nannaya.

Original work in Telugu begins with Srinatha, a 14th century poet at the court of the Reddy Kings of Konda Veedu. He was called Kavi Sarvabhauma (Poet Emperor), for his contemporary satires, the new idiomatic and metrical trends he set

and the sheer felicity of his language, in works like *Pallanati Viracharita*, *Marut-tara Charita* and *Salvabana Sapta Shti*.

Other original works like *Bhogini Pandaka*, *Virabhadra Vijaya* and *Narayana Shataka* were written by Potana, who was also the first to translate the *Bhagavata Purana* into Telugu with the help of his disciples.

Music entered Telugu poetry in a major way in the 15th century with prolific composers like the Vaishnava Tallapakka family, especially Annamacharya (See Performing Arts: Music). The age of Krishnadevaraya, the most renowned ruler of the Vijayanagar empire was known for prabandha (compositions). His court poets were called the Ashta Diggaja (named for the eight mythical elephants supposed to be shouldering Mother Earth from all points of the compass). They wrote poetic compositions that lent themselves to theatre, to music and public recitation. Some of the best were by Peddana, called *Andhra Kavita Pitamaha* (the grandsire of Telugu poetry), Nandi Timmana, Ayyalaraju Rambhadra, Dhurjati and the witty Tenali Raman, whose quicksilver conversation with Krishnadevaraya passed into folklore, just as Akbar and Birbal's exchanges did in the north.

The 15th century is also marked by Pingala Surana (1520-80), whose *Kalapurnodaya*, a comedy of errors is a milestone in original writing. He was also a pioneer of *Sblesha Kavita*, full of puns and wrote *Raghava Pandaviya* narrating the story of Rama and the Pandavas in one poem.

For 150 years after the 16th century, Thanjavur was the scene of hectic literary activity. The poet Chenakari Venkata wrote *Vijaya Vilasa*, full of pun and irony. Raghunadaraya (1600-33) wrote *Valmiki Charita*, *Ramayana* and *Sringara Savitri*. The dancers in his staged *Ramayana* were the court dancers (devadasis) of Thanjavur.

Others like Sheshan Venkatapati Samukham, Venkata Krishnappa Nayaka and Muddipalam, portrayed contemporary life under a Puranic veil. In this age Yakshagana ballads flourished (See Performing Arts: Theatre). Viswanath Nayaka wrote a prose work *Rayavachakam*, bridging the forms of poetry and prose. In lyrical poetry, the best-known works were by Ramadasu.

Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri further enriched Telugu lyric poetry (See Performing Arts: Music). Vemana wrote verses like the *Vemana Shataka*, replete with pithy and epigrammatic expressions which satirised

contemporary society. Chellapilla Venkata Shastry and Devakarala Tirupati Shastry (author of *Buddhacharita* and *Devi Bhagavatam*) are the link poets between the medieval and modern ages. Like their predecessor Srinatha, they toured extensively and though there was nothing original in their work, they served as a conduit for modern writing, especially for 20th century social realists like the novelist Vakati Panduranga Rao.

URDU

From Turkish, meaning military camp, a language born of India's multi-cultural environment, blending Brajbhasa, Persian and Arabic. First appeared as literature in the 16th century courts of Bijapur and Golconda. Earliest specimens are mystic, rhymed poems called mashairs by Shah Miranji, a Bijapur Sufi and Mulla Vajhi of Golconda who wrote on the romance of his royal patron, Ibrahim Qutb Shah and the dancer Bhagmati.

Later poets like Gavvasi developed the mashair in works like *Saif-ul-muluk-e-Badi-ul-Jamal*, *Tuti Nama* and *Maina Satwanti*, the last based on the Sanskrit poem *Sukbasaptati* in which a parrot relates 70 stories. Mirza Muhammad Muqim wrote of local warfare in his *Fateh Nama Bakheri* (1646) and Muhammad Bin Ahmad Aziz wrote Indianized versions of the romances *Yusuf-Zulekha* (1634) and *Laila Majnu* (1636), while Mulla Nusrati documented the rule of Ali Adil Shah Sani in *Ali Nama*.

The ghazal or short poem-song with Sufi meaning (See Performing Arts: Music) took off as a new genre in Urdu poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries. Its early champions were Wali, a mystic poet (1688-1744), who went to Aurangabad after Aurangzeb's sack of Bijapur and his successor Siraj Iham (double meaning). Sufi symbols of a garden, a bird or water and Persian lyricism combined to foster the Delhi School of Urdu poetry, sparked by the arrival of Wali Dakani (Wali of the Deccan) in 1700.

But it was Mir Taqi 'Mir', the great ghazal composer, Khwaja Mir Dard (1720-84), a Sufi writer of short poems and Mir Muhammad Rafi Sauda (1713-80) who wrote qasidahs (panegyrics) and satires on his age, Qayamuddin Khan 'Qaim' and the witty 'Insha' who best typified the Delhi School. Their work enriched Urdu language, its structure and semantics. This period ended brutally and abruptly with the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah and the death of the Mughal Mohammad Shah

'Rangila' in 1748. Mir Taqi 'Mir' turned up in rags at Lucknow and was jeered at. His rejoinder, that he hailed from a city that was 'Alam-e-Intikhab' (honoured in the world) was an epitaph to the Delhi School.

The cultural focus of Urdu shifted to Lucknow under Nawab Asaf-ud-daula's patronage. The Delhi tradition of poetry was continued by Insha, Mir, Hasrat, Mus-hafi and Jurat. By the first quarter of the 19th century, an ornamental metaphorical school of poetry arose, in which 'Nasikh' and 'Aatish' discarded the conventions of the Delhi School. They perfected a mode of elegiac poem called 'marsiya.'

The best known Lucknawi patron and poet was Nawab Wajid Ali Shah who developed Kathak as an operatic dance form, wrote '*Bani*' and '*Najo*,' the first books on Kathak and Thumris or lyrical songs. This glittering period ended rudely with the deposition and exile to Calcutta of Wajid Ali Shah when the British annexed Lucknow in 1858.

Urdu poetry had another brilliant spell in the declining years of the Mughal empire. Poets like Zauq, Mirza Ghalib, Momin and even the Mughal, Bahadur Shah 'Zafar' wrote with longing and melancholy for a vanishing era. Zauq wrote of moral precepts in idiomatic language. His pupil, Bahadur Shah 'Zafar' wrote ghazals, as did Momin, while Ghalib, the maestro, wrote intellectually and emotionally profound poetry that is revered today as the best of its time (See People: Great Indians).

The 19th century pushed Urdu prose in new directions. The East India Company commissioned Mir Amman of Delhi who wrote the *Bagh-o-Bahar* to teach Urdu to its officers. The establishment of the Vernacular Translation Society in 1843 led to Urdu translations of English books. Ghalib's letters, Saiyid's writings and Urdu newspapers used simple, direct prose, unlike the ornate writing of Lucknow.

The Lucknow flourish was introduced in prose by Mir Rajab Ali Beg in his *Farsana-e-Ajeeb*, in contrast to Mir Amman's primer, *Bagh-o-Bahar*. Beg's ornate style was popular in Lucknow for nearly 50 years and ended in 1857 with the Revolt and the consequent establishment of the Urdu Press by Munshi Naval Kishore.

The first Urdu novel appeared in 1869 (Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Utrus*). Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar's *Fasana-e-Azad* described Lucknow's decadence, while Mirza Muhammad Hadi Ruswa wrote *Umrao Jaan Ada* (1899) on a Lucknawi



Urdu calligraphy at the Qutub Minar complex

courtesan. Social realism was carried further by Munshi Premchand in the 20's, in novels like *Gausa-e-Afiat*, *Chaugan-e-Hasti* and *Maidan-e-Amal* and in short stories like *Kafan*.

The turn of the century also saw the emergence of nationalistic writing and a new, direct tone in poetry with the work of Hali (*Hubb-e-Vatan*, *Ummid-ki-Khushî*). Azad, Sayyid, Shibli, Durga Sahai, Braj Narain Chakbast, Suraj Narain 'Mehor' and especially, Akbar Allahabadi challenged western values and dominance but satirically rather than as a reformer.

Incandescent verse flowed from Mohammed 'Allama' Iqbal (1877-1938) who had a tremendous following of young people including novelists like Mulk Raj Anand. Stirring nationalist poetry formed a strong component of Iqbal's work. His *Tarana-e-Hind* (Song of India) with the refrain *Saare Jahan Se Achha, Hindostan Hamara* (There is no land like India in the whole world) is played at almost all nationalist gatherings. The old literary tradition of Mushaira, or gathering of poets, still flourishes and fosters Urdu verse.

Urdu drama goes back only to Wajid

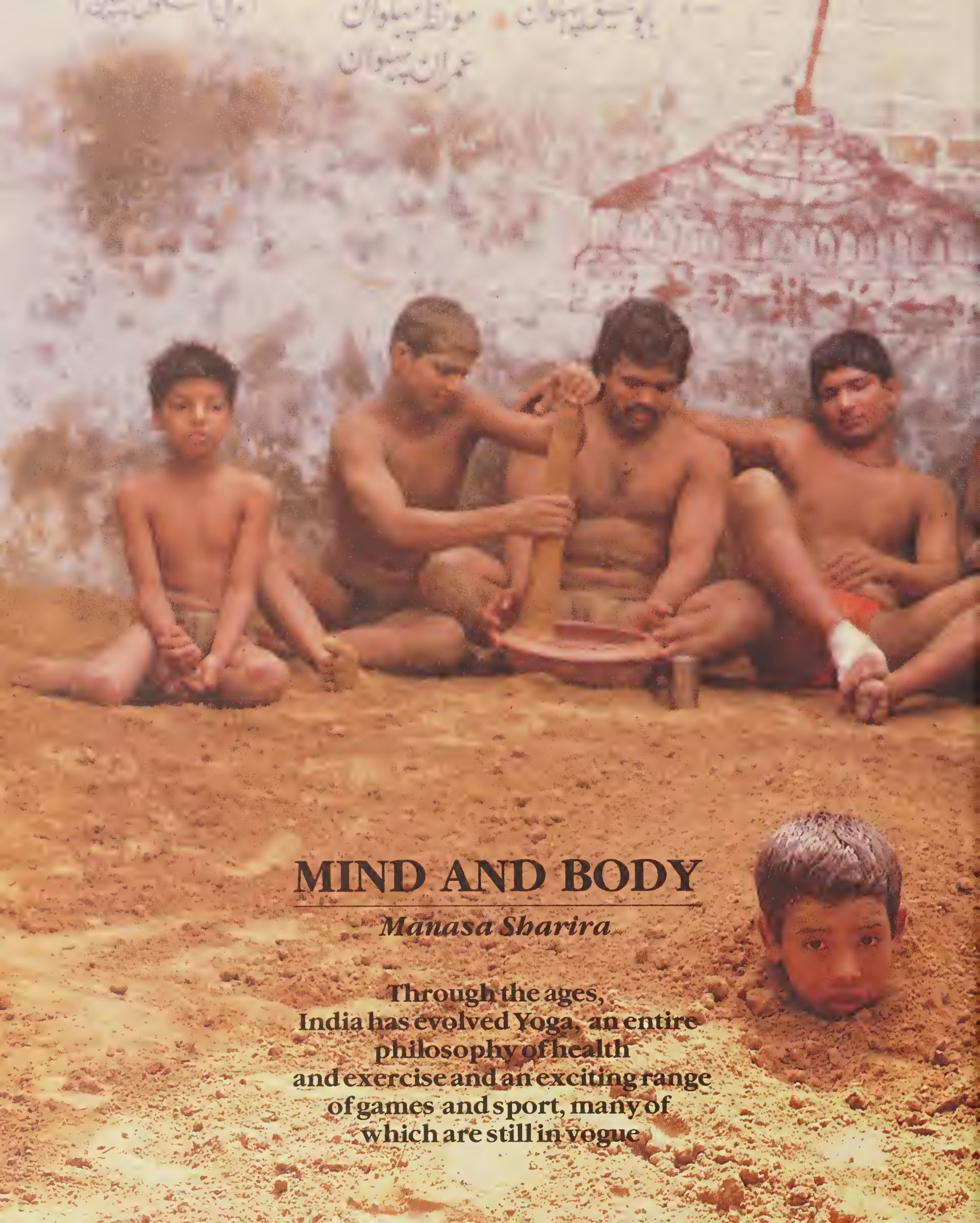
Ali Shah's *Radha Kanhaiya Ka Qissa* in the 19th century and Amanat's *Inder Sabha*, while plays like *Anarkali* by Imtiaz Ali Taj, and by Muhammed Mujid and Ish-tiaq Qureishi were the sole early experiments in drama. It was the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) that dynamised Urdu drama, decrying feudal and class oppression in plays like Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's *Zubaida* (1943), while later playwrights like Sagar Sarhadi, Zahida Zaidi and Anwar Azeem dealt with universals in human relationships.

The modern ghazal, through the writings of Hasrat Mohani, Asghar Gondhri, Jigar Moradabadi and Fani Badayuni sang of modern attitudes to love, beauty and social protest, while retaining a classical structure. Essential concepts like secularism, nationalism and equality were vocalized by Josh Malihabadi, Hafiz Jullundri, Saghar Nizami Josh and Anand Narain Mulla.

The October Revolution of 1917 affected later poets like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Majaz, Ali Sardar Jafri, Kaifi Azmi, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Sahir Ludhianvi, Makh-dum Mohiuddin and Akhtar Amari, while the

progressive movement of the 40s threw up novelists and short story writers like Krishna Chander, Ismat Chughtai and Sadat Hasan Manto who vividly chronicled the socio-political upheavals of their time, especially Partition.

Other modern Urdu novelists of note are Qurrat-ul-ain Hyder (*Aag-ka-Darya* or *River of Fire*), and Rajinder Singh Bedi (*Ek Chadar Maili Si*), Anwar Azeem, Iqbal Matin, Upendra Nath Ashik, Balwant Singh and Suhel Azimabadi.



MIND AND BODY

Manasa Sharira

Through the ages,
India has evolved Yoga, an entire
philosophy of health
and exercise and an exciting range
of games and sport, many of
which are still in vogue

SPORTS & GAMES

Several internationally popular games, notably Chess, Polo, Badminton, Snooker and Ludo either originated in India or were modified here to their present state. Plus there are a host of skilled indigenous games that are still enjoyed in traditional homes.

AKHARA

Training school for Indian wrestlers. A long tradition, from the epic period, Krishna is said to have defeated a formidable wrestler Chanura. The traditional wrestlers served as royal bodyguards. Now, as in olden times, the chief instructor is addressed respectfully as 'guru' and the tutelary deity is Hanuman, worshipped as Bajrang Bali, the embodiment of strength (See Festivals: Hanuman Jayanti; Religion : Hinduism - Epics - Ramayana).

BADMINTON

The first modern rules of this game were evolved in Pune in 1876. It is named for its place of origin at Badminton Hall in Gloucestershire, England, the seat of the Dukes of Beaufort.

BODHI DHARMA

A 2nd century AD Buddhist monk, widely travelled is believed to have studied Kalari-payattu, the martial art of Kerala and introduced it in China and Japan, where it is said to have inspired Karate, Taekwondo and other local martial arts (See Religion: Buddhism).

CHATURANGA

Shatranj, Chess. Originated in India. Its name, chatur (four) anga (arms), signifies the four parts of an army – elephants (rooks), horses (knights), chariots (now bishops) and footsoldiers (pawns).

Chess is now an international sport with its own bi-annual Olympics.

DURAND CUP

The oldest national trophy for football, it was instituted in 1863 by the then foreign secretary of India, Sir Mortimer Durand.

DYUTA KRIDA

Or Aksha Krida which denotes a game of dice. It was a very popular pastime and even royal personages indulged in it. Dice were found in the Indus Valley excavations. In Vedic literature there are frequent references to Aksha Krida.

GANDO MAKKAL PALA

A rural wrestling sport of the north-east. The game starts with a player taking out a

piece of cloth from his waist and challenging others to accept it. One who challenges has to wrestle with the owner of the cloth and if he fails, the challenge continues until he is declared the winner.

KABADDI

An old team sport of which the Sanjeevani form is governed by the rules of the Kabaddi Federation of India. One player from each side advances and crouches before his opponent, circling and manoeuvring to cross a line drawn in the middle. The objective is to touch and drag the opponent into one's 'side' across the line without losing one's position. It involves considerable physical coordination and alertness. Also called 'Hututu' from the sound made by the opponent as they jockey for an advantageous stance from which to grab the opponent. Kabaddi has three forms: Amar, in which a touched (i.e. 'out') player stands in the court and the player who touches him wins a point; Gamini, in which there is no 'revival' of players: when all members of one team are out, the game ends; Sanjeevani, in which one 'out' player from a team is 'revived' when an opponent is out. Kabaddi was declared a national game in 1952, the year in which the K. F. I. was formed. It was first demonstrated abroad at the Berlin Olympics, 1936, by the Hanuman Vyayam Pracharak Mandal, Amravati, Maharashtra.

KALARI

An institution for physically training boys of the Nair caste in the martial arts of Kerala. The ancient art was called Kalaripayattu. Apart from learning to wield weapons, special physical exercises were also part of the discipline to make the body supple. There were also oil massages to increase elasticity of the body. The vigorous Kathakali (See Performing Arts: Dance) is deeply influenced by the physical culture of the Kalari gymnasium.

KANDUKA

A ball made of wood, pith or cloth. Women were known to play with the Kanduka because apart from giving them some exercise it was an opportunity to learn graceful movements. In one of the chapters of the *Mahabharata* (Vanaparva) courtesans are described playing with the ball to seduce the sage Rishyashringa. A girl, physically well-endowed, playing with the Kanduka is a motif often found on the sculptured walls of temples (See Religion: Hinduism - Epics).

KE NANG HUAN

Pig-catching, the popular sport of tribal men in the Nicobar Islands. They herd a pig into a bamboo cage and tie one of its legs to

a long rope. The cage is then smashed with an axe and two men stand five metres away from it, to grapple with and pin down the angry pig as it rushes out, all within a set time limit.

KHO-KHO

From the sound made by players at crucial moments in the game. Played by two teams who crouch in a row, facing alternate directions, except for a runner from each side. The pursued runner may quickly tap a crouching team member (only from behind, to the cry of 'kho') and take her or his place to avoid being caught. The player who is tapped must now run around the row of crouched players to avoid capture. The objective is to touch or 'capture' as many as possible. The game concludes naturally when only one player is left crouching. Kho-kho was once called RATHERA, because it was originally played with raths (chariots), particularly by the kings of the Chalukya and Rashtrakuta dynasties in west and south India, between the 8th and 10th centuries AD (See History: Dynasties).

MALLAKHAMB

Lit. 'the gymnast's pole' in Sanskrit; is an old system of physical culture that finds mention in the Chalukya classic *Manasollasa*, 1135 AD. It dwindled thereafter for seven centuries and was revived in the 19th century by Balambhatta Dada Deodhar, physical instructor to the Maratha ruler, Peshwa Baji Rao II. It continues to be taught in modern Indian sports institutions (See History: Dynasties).

MANCHALA

The generic name of an old Indian board game in which players distribute 'pieces' in rows of holes by gathering, throwing and catching them. The goal is to 'capture' as many pieces as possible in one turn. The 'pieces' could be cowrie shells, beads or marbles. The Tamil version, Pallanguzhi, is a game for two players, with six seeds each in seven holes for each player. Manchala games have different rules, versions and names across India.

OFFICERS AND SEPOYS

A board game played by British officers after the Indian uprising of 1857-58. A square represented a fort and one player placed two 'officers' on any two points within its walls. All pieces are moved one point at a time on any marked line, except the sepoys, who moved in short jumps and could be stopped. The 'sepoys' won if they occupied all the points in the fort, or if they immobilized all the officers.

PACHISI

Lit. 'twentyfiver', an ancient Indian game from which Ludo, the English game patented in 1850, was derived. Pachisi is named for the 25-plus-one 'grace' moves to be made by each player's counters over a cross-shaped board. The counters move to the throw of dice. The best known Pachisi board in India is in a vast courtyard at the abandoned Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri, built for Akbar. Female slaves stood in for counters, moving from square to square according to the fall of the dice. Pachisi is perhaps the most popular board game across India. A vivid description in the *Calcutta Review*, 1851 describes how 'even Brahmins and Sudras' played together in Bengal, in the shade of bakul trees, while smoking hookahs.

POLO

The equestrian game of Indian origin. In the modern version, four mounted players from two teams attempt to score goals from horseback, using long Polo sticks, in time bound periods called 'chukkas'. One of the earliest forms of Polo is said to have originated in Manipur c. 34 AD. Locally called Sagol kangjei (sagol - horse, kang - ball, jei - stick), it is popular with ordinary people. The Persian version (Chaugan) and the Afghani version (Buzkashi) were introduced in India by Muslim settlers and the present version of Polo was codified in the 19th century by British planters in north-east India. Polo is an expensive game and except in its home of origin, Manipur, has been associated with the ruling class. (The first sultan of Delhi Qutub-ud-din Aibak, died in 1210 AD of injuries sustained when he fell from his horse in a game of Chaugan).

The world's oldest Polo club, the Calcutta Club, was founded in 1865 by British Indian Army officers. England's first Polo club followed in 1874 at Hurlington.

PYNPUH SY!AR

Cock-fight. This is a game enjoyed by the Khasis, especially during festival days (See People: Tribes).

SIAT KHNAM

Archery. A very popular game among the Khasis (See People: Tribes) both rural as well as urban, it can be compared to horse racing in that a lot of betting takes place. This game is keenly followed by many others in the state of Meghalaya as a lot of money is involved.

SNOOKER

Invented in 1875 at Jabalpur, by an English colonel, Sir Neville Francis Chamberlain (1856-1944), a combination of 'Black pool',



Mallakbamb

Pyramids and Billiards. But the game found regular patronage in Udhagamandalam (Ooty) where Snooker tournaments were first held. Snooker reached England ten years after its invention and the modern scoring system began in 1891.

STICK-WIELDING

Called lathi in Hindi, Karrattam in Telugu, Neduvadi in Kerala, Dhal lakadi in Gujarat and Silambam in Tamil Nadu, this sport of wielding long bamboo staffs is popular across India, particularly in rural fairs, village contests and festivals. Used since prehistoric times as a weapon, bamboo staves are found plentifully in the subcontinent. Hereditary teachers instruct groups of young men and it is today a widespread exhibition sport.

THODA

A game of archery in Himachal Pradesh, played by two opposing village teams on

Baisakhi Day (usually falls on 13th April; See Festivals) in Kulu-Manali. Believed to date back to the days of the epic *Mahabharata*, Thoda is named for the round wooden piece that blunts arrowheads. Two large groups of about 500 men each, called sathi and pashi, loudly challenge each other. The objective is to strike opponents below the knee with arrows. The 'game' was once an actual battle tradition: those struck down lost their heads.

WAPONG SIKGRIKA

A game played by the villagers of the north-east. A long bamboo pole is used by two teams to decide who the stronger one is. It is something like the tug-o'-war.

YUBEE-LAKPEE

From Manipuri. yubee - coconut, lakpee - to snatch. A popular Manipuri ball game played with an oiled coconut that players try to snatch from each other.

YOGA

One of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, Yoga is an ancient and efficient system of discipline (dating back to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras c. 150 BC).

YOGA

Yoga originally meant 'to contemplate'. But now it has also come to mean communion and 'yoking all the powers of body, mind and soul to god'. Training in Yoga is divided into eight stages (See Philosophy ; Religion: Hinduism; Science).

YAMA

The first stage deals with the ethical disciplines and restraints in relation to others; no stealing, no speaking untruths, nonviolence and causing no harm to fellow men and animals (ahimsa), abstinence, continence, no coveting and no acquisitiveness.

NIYAMA

The second stage has to do with restraints on one's own body and mind; cleanliness, no self-indulgence, contentment and acceptance, no anger and a general faith in all work being an act of devotion to god.

ASANAS

Postures and exercises to steady the body and mind and make it strong and stable. This is the stage Yoga today has chiefly come to be associated with. There are several asanas and one gradually graduates to the most exalted ones, culminating in Samadhi or a state of superconsciousness.

PADMASANA

The lotus pose, seated on the ground, legs crossed, arms stretched down to the ground, palms out and fingers straight. This is best known as the asana for meditation. The Buddha and various divinities and saints are depicted in Padmasana.

PRANAYAMA

Control of breath which helps one to clear the mind for the 'emptiness' - a prerequisite for the later stages.

PRATYAHARA

Withdrawal of senses from their objects. That is, the mind controls all senses and withdraws from all sense-objects. This results in the triumph of the mind over the domination of the senses.

DHARANA

Steadying of the mind by concentrating on a single object.



Yoga. Gomukha Asana

DHYANA

Meditation, whereby the object of meditation fills the mind.

SAMADHI

Deep meditation leading to a stage of superconsciousness.

DIVISIONS

Apart from eight stages in Yoga training, the system is also said to have seven divisions.

HATHA YOGA

Primarily concerned with the body and the asanas (exercises).

BHAKTI YOGA

Deals with the path of love and devotion.

MANTRA YOGA

Concentrates on the recitation and repetition of words and verses.

KARMA YOGA

Deals with service to others through action and words.

JNANA YOGA

The intellectual path.

RAJA YOGA

Synthesis of bhakti, karma and jnana.

LAYA YOGA

The secret path or 'the Yoga of dissolution'.



MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Mithaka Akhyana

Some old stories and *sthalapuranas* (local legends) go beyond a particular era or region: they belong to the common cultural heritage of India and are retold by grandmothers, pilgrims or the traditional storyteller at nightfall

MITHAKA AKHYANA

The word myth is believed to have been derived from the Sanskrit mithaka. Akhyana means ancient story, legend or myth. The oldest surviving Akhyanas, about 20 of them composed in verse and dialogue form, are those in the *Rig Veda*. There are reasons to believe that the dramatic dialogue of the theatre evolved from the narrative element of the Akhyana, written by 'Akhyana-vidas'. Many of these ancient tales have come down to us through professional storytellers like Sutras and Kathaks down the ages.

ANANTASAYANAM

Two stories are told about the origin of the temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. According to one legend, there was once a forest where the temple is now located. A peasant couple used to cultivate a paddy field there. One day, the wife heard a cry and saw a beautiful child lying under a tree, crying. Picking up the child, she breast-fed it and went for a dip in the river. On her return she found a five-hooded cobra sheltering the baby from the sun. Since it was believed that the child was the incarnation of Vishnu, the ruler of the place had a temple built in honour of Vishnu.

Another legend goes that a hermit, Bilwamangal Swami, was offering prayers to a Saligram or sacred black stone (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts) when he found that whenever he closed his eyes a child was playing around with his articles of worship. The minute he opened his eyes, the child vanished. So he hit out at the child with his eyes closed. On opening his eyes, he found that the child was Vishnu himself. Later, when the hermit approached the forest of Ananta, he heard the crash of a tree and saw Vishnu lying on a thousand-headed snake. The swami offered worship and prepared an idol of the Lord from the very tree which had earlier fallen and installed it. The temple around the idol came to be called Padmanabha or Anantasayanam.

ARUNACHALA

The Shiva temple at Thiruvannamalai or Arunachala 'holy fire hill' has been associated in recent years with Ramana Maharshi (See Sages and Saints). But ancient legend has a quaint story attached to it. It seems that a dispute once arose between Vishnu and Brahma as to who was superior. When the argument was at its height, Shiva appeared between the two as a column of fire. A voice from the sky urged the two gods to stop fighting. Vishnu and Brahma assumed the respective form of boar and swan and tried to find the two ends of the column of

fire. Being unsuccessful in their attempts, they finally prayed to Shiva, who was pleased and changed into a linga (See Nature: Trees/Plants – Ketaki; Religion: Hinduism – Shiva) at the Arunachala. The linga here is known as Tajasalinga.

BADRINATH

The two mountains Nara and Narayana Parbat flank a temple in the Badrinath valley on the right bank of the river Alaknanda, 300 km from Hardwar.

The belief goes that Adi Shankara built the Badrinath temple in the 9th century and installed the image procured from the depths of the Narada Kunda. The sage Vyasa is called Badarayana as he was born in the forest of Badari and had his hermitage at Badrikashram, mentioned in *Bhagavata*, *Mundakopanishad* and *Mat-sya Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranas). There are five tirthas and four silas around Badrinath and performing sraaddha (death rites) here is believed to ensure moksha (liberation) for ancestors.

BHISHMA

Once when Shantanu, king of the Purus, was hunting by the Ganga, he saw a woman as beautiful as Goddess Lakshmi. He fell in love with her and proposed marriage. She agreed, on condition that no matter what she did, she should not be questioned and if he ever stopped her from doing what she wanted, she would leave him. The king accepted all her conditions.

For a while, they lived happily till the queen gave birth to a son whom she drowned in the Ganga. She did this with seven of her children. When the queen was about to subject the eighth child to the same fate, the hapless king protested. The queen then disclosed that she was Ganga born on earth through Brahma's curse and the children born to her were the eight Vasus who had also been cursed to be born on earth. By drowning them in the river, she had released them from the curse. She also reminded the king of the conditions she had imposed at the time of marriage and left him taking the eighth child with her.

Once while sitting near the river, the grief-stricken king noticed that the flow had slowed down. He saw a young, bright boy stopping the flow of the river with his arrows. Ganga then appeared and told the king that the boy was his son and that he was well versed in the *Shastras* (holy books) and the art of war. Handing the boy over to the king, Ganga left. The boy, Devavrata, was taken to the palace.

One day while Shantanu was sitting on the banks of the Yamuna, he became

aware of a sweet perfume in the air which he traced to a very beautiful young woman. She disclosed that she was Satyawati, the daughter of a fisherman and her job was to row people across the river. The smitten Shantanu approached her father for her hand in marriage. The girl's father agreed only on the condition that Satyawati's son would ascend the throne after Shantanu. The king could not agree to the condition but he brooded about the girl.

When Devavrata came to know the real reason for the king's gloom he went to Satyawati's father and asked his daughter's hand in marriage for King Shantanu. Devavrata even took an oath that he would not lay claim to the throne and that Satyawati's progeny alone would be heirs. The fisherman said that while he had faith in Devavrata, he could not say the same for unborn children, for they could claim the throne.

In the presence of several Kshatriyas, Devavrata said that he had already given up his claim to the throne and to ensure that the children of Satyawati and Shantanu succeeded to the throne, he would not marry. Thereupon, the fisherman gave his daughter in marriage to Shantanu.

Since Devavrata took such a difficult oath and remained so firm in its implementation, he was known as 'Bhishma' the terrible, and later as Bhishma Pitamaha, the grand-sire, in the *Mahabharata* and other epics and *Puranas* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics).

GAYA

Considered one of the most auspicious places where liberation or mukti may be attained, Gaya is mentioned in *Rig Veda* and in the *Mahabharata*.

According to legend when the big asura (demon) named Gaya, performed penance at Kolahala mount, Vishnu granted him a boon that anyone touching him would go to Vaikuntha (Vishnu's abode). Because of this boon, more and more people, began to go to heaven and Yama's kingdom (hell) become sparsely populated. So, to set matters right, Brahma went to the asura and asked him to give his body so that a sacrifice could be performed. Gaya agreed but towards the end of the sacrifice, Gaya's head began to shake. Although Yama placed the Dharmasila on Gaya's head, it continued to shake. The head stopped shaking only when Vishnu himself came with his mace and stood on the Dharmasila. For submitting to all the torture, Gaya was granted another boon which was that all gods including Vishnu, would permanently

stand on his head. This place came to be called Gayasiras or Vishnupada.

Performing sraadh (death rites) at Gaya, to liberate one's ancestors is recommended because of the Vishnupada. It is also believed that the Vaitarini river at Gaya liberates dead ancestors.

The Bodhi tree beneath which Gautama attained knowledge and became the Buddha is situated about 11 km from Gaya (See Holy Places; Religion: Buddhism).

JANMEJAYA'S SERPENT SACRIFICE

King Parikshit of the Kuru dynasty was a learned man, well loved by his subjects. Once, while on a hunt, tired and thirsty, he reached the hermitage of a sage called Shameek. The king tried to speak to the sage but since the latter was observing the vow of silence (mouna vrata), he did not respond to the king. The king felt insulted and without further thought he picked up a dead snake from the ground with his arrow and threw it around the sage's neck, and walked out of the place.

The sage's son, Shringi, also a well-read, accomplished, holy man, heard of the insult to his father and his anger was uncontrollable. He cursed the king to death by snakebite within seven days which would instantly reduce him to ashes. When sage Shameek woke up from his trance, Shringi told him what had happened and how he had cursed the king. Shameek felt his son had been unnecessarily harsh on the king. He therefore, called one of his disciples and asked him to go to the king, and apprise him of the curse.

On the seventh day of the curse the snake, Takshaka, was on his way to Parikshit's palace, when he saw the Brahmin, Kashyap, who had the power to bring to life a person killed by snakebite. Takshaka after preventing him from going to the king's palace, slipped in and bit Parikshit. The strong poison soon reduced the king to ashes.

King Parikshit was succeeded by his son, Janmejaya, who was also a righteous king. When he heard of the circumstances of his father's death, he was angry with Takshaka and sought the advice of learned men on how to punish the snake. He was told to perform snake sacrifice, but he was warned that the sacrifice would be thwarted by a Brahmin.

The sacrifice began on an auspicious day and as the different serpents were called out by name, they came and fell into the sacrificial fire and were destroyed. Thousands of snakes were thus killed.

Vasuki, the king of snakes was worried that before long his turn would also come. He therefore called upon his sister to pre-

vail upon her son Usheeka, a learned and holy man, to save the race of snakes. Usheeka assured his uncle that Janmejaya's serpent sacrifice would soon be ended. Usheeka went to the place where the sacrifice was taking place and praised the ritual, the king and Agni (fire god). The king, most pleased with the young boy, told him to ask for a boon.

At this time, Takshaka had sought Indra's protection. When the priests performing the sacrifice came to know this, they called upon both Indra and Takshaka to fall into the sacrificial fire. Indra began to run and Takshaka was about to fall into the fire. At this juncture Usheeka was granted his boon which was that the snake sacrifice should be stopped to keep alive the race of snakes. Takshaka was saved.

KANCHI

During a dispute over a game of dice, Gauri insulted Shiva who cursed her into turning ugly, until with Vishnu's help, she was able to mollify him with a penance under a particular mango tree in Kanchi (See Religion: Hinduism - Puranas). By Vishnu's grace Gauri became Kamakshi or the one with lovely eyes. To test Gauri's devotion, Shiva released Ganga. (See Nature: Rivers). Frightened by the sudden rush of water, Gauri clung to the image of Shiva. Shiva was so pleased that he agreed to stay under the mango tree and because of that he is called Ekamranatha (Eka-one, amra-mango).

A peetha (seat) of the Shankaracharya at Kanchipuram is called Kamakothipeetham (See Holy Places: Temples - Kamakshiamman; Sages and Saints).

KASHI

The *Skanda Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism - Puranas) narrates how Shiva's penance shines (Kas - to shine) here, hence the name Kashi. It is also known as Avimuktaka because it is free from sin (avi) and is never deserted by the Lord. As the place is supposed to delight the Lord it is also called Ananda Kanana. Finally, it is called Varanasi because it lies between the two rivers Varanasi and Asi.

Lord Vishwanath (Shiva) is the presiding deity of Kashi. The jyotirlinga here is one of the 12 principal Shaiva shrines (See Holy Places - Temples) and it goes back to the beginning of epic and Puranic times. Besides the Vishwanath temple there are five important places - Lolarka, Kesava temple at the confluence of Varuna and Asi, Panchaganga ghat, Dasaswamedha ghat and Manikarnika ghat.

Legend goes that once Vishnu had dug a pit with his chakra (wheel) while he was performing severe penance and the pit

filled with his sweat. Seeing this, Shiva shook his head in admiration and a jewel from his ear fell into the pit, which is today the Manikarnika ghat.

Hindus believe that to die in Kashi means liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

For Buddhists, Kashi is sacred because the Buddha preached for the first time at nearby Sarnath, and set in motion the Wheel of Law (See Religion: Buddhism).

KEDARNATH

The temple of Kedarnath nestles in the Himalayas at 3,000 m above sea level. The range is called the Rudra Himalaya or Pancha Parvata which stands for five peaks - Rudra Himalaya, Vishnupuri, Brahmapuri, Udgari-Kantha and Swargarohini. Gandhamadana hill is part of Rudra Himalaya. It was while climbing Swargarohini that the four Pandavas died. Only Yudhishtira survived along with his faithful dog (See Religion: Hinduism - Epics).

It is believed that two sages Nara and Narayana while performing penance at Badrikashram, worshipped Shiva as a linga made of earth. Pleased with their devotion, Shiva agreed to stay at Kedar in the form of a jyotirlinga.

Another legend has it that the Pandavas, after the *Mahabharata* war, came here for mental peace. When Shiva saw the Pandavas, he assumed the form of a male buffalo on the run. When the Pandavas tried to catch him, Shiva dived into the earth and only the hind quarters remained behind at Kedar. The buffalo's arms fell at Tunganatha, his face at Rudranatha, his belly at Madhyameswara and his tresses at Kalpeswara: the Panchkedar.

Kedarnath finds mention in the *Mahabharata*, *Devi Bhagavat*, *Shiva Purana* and the *Rig Veda* (See Religion: Hinduism).

KURUKSHETRA

Kurukshetra, about 40 km east of Ambala in Haryana has been mentioned in the *Vedas*, *Brahmanas* and epics. It is said that King Kuru, son of Samvarana, ploughed seven kosas of land which came to be known as Kurukshetra. He persuaded Indra to bless those who died either doing penance or in a battle at Kurukshetra so that they would go to heaven. The *Mahabharata* war was fought at Kurukshetra (See Religion: Hinduism - Epics) and it was here that Lord Krishna explained the message of *Gita* to Arjuna. During Vedic times the Saraswati river flowed through Kurukshetra and it has been described in the *Rig Veda* as the purifier and inspiration of noble deeds.



The Mahabharata war at Kurukshetra

There are several tirthas (places of pilgrimage) in and around Kurukshetra. Legend goes that Parashurama Lake or Samanta Panchaka was formed after Parashurama's penance for killing a large number of Kshatriyas when the pools of blood were converted to holy water. It is believed that all celibates who bathe here and worship Parashurama, gain wealth.

Varaha tirtha is the place where Vishnu is said to have stood in his incarnation of a boar. At Vyasasthali, Vyasa, who resolved to give up life in grief for his dead son, Suka, was persuaded by the gods not to do so. There are other similar tirthas associated with Bhishma and Kartikeya (See Religion: Hinduism – *Puranas*, Saints and Sages; Holy Places).

MADURAI

A merchant prince once saw Indra worshipping Shiva and reported this to King Kulasekhara of Manavur. Shiva appeared in the king's dream in the guise of Sundareswara and drops of nectar fell from his matted hair. That is how Madura (madhura – sweetness) got its name. A serpent's movements marked the boundaries of the town. When the serpent coiled itself, the enclosure made by its tail and mouth was selected as the sanctuary of the temple.

It is believed that Meenakshi, who was the incarnation of Parvati, was born to the Pandya king, Malayadhwaja (See History: Dynasties). Shiva assumed the form of Sundara and married her (See Holy Places: Temples).

NALA-DAMAYANTI

Nala was a valorous, virtuous king, whose one weakness was a passion for gambling. Damayanti was a princess of Vidarbha, famed for her beauty and goodness. A celestial swan acted as a go-between and they fell in love even before they met.

When Damayanti's swayamvara (marriage by choice) was announced, Nala set out to formally win her hand. On the way, Indra, Varuna, Yama and Agni, on the same errand, asked him to plead their cause. Nala did so but Damayanti prayed to the four to let her marry the man she loved. The gods allowed it to be so and Nala took his bride home.

Two children were born, but their happiness was destroyed when Nala lost everything he owned in a crooked game of dice with his brother. Turned out of his kingdom, Nala sent his children to Damayanti's father and wandered barefoot in the jungle with his faithful wife. Depressed, he abandoned her and, in a grotesque guise, served as King Rituparna's charioteer.

Damayanti, in a ruse to locate him, had her father announce a second swayamvara, to which Rituparna was sped by his charioteer. On the way Rituparna, impressed by Nala's expert handling of the horses, offered to teach him his skill with the dice in exchange. At Vidarbha, Nala and Damayanti were reunited and Nala managed to win back his kingdom from his brother.

PALANI

Palani in the Madurai district of Tamil Nadu is famous for the temple of Subrahmanya, who is also known as Skanda, Kartikeya, Shanmukha, Senani, Kumara, Guha, Tarakajit, Saravanabhava, Agnibhu and Swami (See Holy Places: Temples; Religion: Hinduism – *Puranas*).

Once Shiva's two sons, Subrahmanya and Ganesha, got into a dispute about who could go round the world faster. Subrahmanya set out immediately on his peacock. Ganesha on the other hand, knowing there was no way he could compete with his nimbler brother, went round his parents and claimed that since they were his world, he had accomplished the task faster.

Shiva saw the truth in Ganesha's ingenuity and gave him a pomegranate (fruit of knowledge) as the prize. Subrahmanya returned after his arduous journey round the world and found he had been deprived of the prize. Shiva consoled Subrahmanya saying that he did not need a prize because he was a fruit himself (Palam-nee). But Subrahmanya was unhappy and left Kailasa and settled down in Sivagiri Hill, a creation of Agastya which today is called Palani.

PRAYAGARAJA

Prayagaraja is the ancient name for Allahabad which is at the confluence of the three holy rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. The *Rig Veda* says that those who bathe here go to heaven.

According to legend, the name is derived from the mahayajna or great sacrifice that was performed by Prajapati (Brahma) here – 'Pra' from Prajapati, 'yaga' from yajna and 'raja' signifies its importance, placing this tirthasthan (holy place) above the others.

Prayaga is associated with both the epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics). It is at Prayaga that Rama crossed the Ganga and went to Chitrakoot. After the *Mahabharata* war, Yudhishtira became emperor but he was saddened over the deaths of so many of his brothers. Sage Markandeya advised him to undertake a journey to

Prayaga so that he could attain mental peace. It is said that each step taken in Prayaga gives merit equivalent to performing the Aswamedha Yajna or horse sacrifice (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts)

The Kumbha Mela (See Holy Places) takes place once in 12 years at Prayaga. It is said that Brihaspati, the preceptor of gods, ran away with the pot of nectar as it emerged from the churning of the ocean (See Religion: Hinduism – Vishnu – Kshirasagara Manthana). He was chased by the rakshasas (demons) and during the chase a few drops of the nectar fell at Prayaga, Nasik, Ujjain and Hardwar. Hence bathing at these places during Kumbha Mela is believed to wash away one's sins.

The Akshaya Vata (sacred Banyan) tree is situated in the port of Allahabad. After worshipping the tree devout people give up certain foods, fruits and vegetables for life.

PURI

King Indradyumna of Malwa wanted to locate the Lord's image and install it on earth. He performed several sacrifices and pujas. One day, Vasudeva, (the world's teacher) appeared to him in a dream and directed him to go alone at daybreak to the seashore where he would see a tall firm tree, washed by the waves of the sea. He should cut the tree and carve the Lord's image out of it. The king obeyed all instructions. He saw the tree, cut it and brought it home.

Vishnu and Vishwakarma came to the king disguised as Brahmins and offered to make the image provided they were left alone. The king agreed and left them to make images of Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra. The Lord again appeared in his dream and reassured him that the images were indeed in his likeness. The king installed them in the temple at Puri at an auspicious hour.

Adi Shankara (See Sages and Saints) established a peetha (seat) at Puri now known as Govardhan Peeth.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (See Sages and Saints) the founder of the Vishnubhakti cult, was associated with Puri.

The annual car festival of the Lord Jagannath brings large crowds to Puri (See Festivals).

RAMESWARAM

Lord Rama reached Rameswaram, then known as Gandhamadana hill, during his search for Sita after she had been carried away by Ravana (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – *Ramayana*). Since Rama never even sipped water before having a darshan

(holy glimpse) of Lord Shiva, he made an earthen image of Shiva, worshipped him and was blessed in return.

After defeating Ravana in war, Rama came back to Gandhamadana hill. He was advised by sage Agastya and others that he should perform propitiating rites for committing the sin of killing a Brahmin, Ravana. Part of the rites was to establish a jyotirlinga. Hanuman went to Kailasa on Rama's behalf to request Shiva for an appropriate linga. Since Hanuman took a long time to return and the auspicious time was drawing to a close, Rama installed a jyotirlinga called Rameswara which Sita made out of sand and then performed the necessary rites. When Hanuman on his return saw that a linga had already been installed, he was upset for all his efforts had gone to waste. When, Rama saw this, he placed the linga brought by Hanuman by the side of Rameswara or Ramanathaswamy and proclaimed that in future, people would worship the linga (known as Kashi Viswanath) brought by Hanuman first before worshipping Rameswara.

Pouring Ganga water over the idol of Lord Rameswara is considered to be a highly meritorious act and a darshan of Lord Rameswara is believed to wash away all sins.

SAVITRI - SATYAVAN

King Aswapathi performed a number of sacrifices and was blessed with a daughter, Savitri. When Savitri grew up, the king told her that she was old and wise enough to choose a husband. Accordingly, Savitri accompanied by wise men visited various hermitages. On her return, she informed her father that she had chosen Satyavan, the son of Dyumatsen of Shalwa, whose kingdom had been usurped by a neighbouring ruler who had taken advantage of Dyumatsen's blindness and his son's youth. Dyumatsen, his wife and Satyavan had been forced to seek shelter in a forest.

Sage Narada happened to visit Aswapathi and learnt that Savitri had chosen Satyavan as her husband. Narada told the king that while in many respects Satyavan was a suitable husband for Savitri, he had just a year to live. Despite Narada's warning and her father's repeated efforts to dissuade her from marrying Satyavan, Savitri remained firm in her decision.

Savitri was thus married to Satyavan. She lived a simple life as befitted her status and served her husband's parents with great devotion. She was most religious and carried out the duties of a faithful wife. When the end of the momentous year was approaching, Savitri began to

practise special rigours after prayers. On the day marking the one year period, Satyavan as usual went to the forest to gather food and firewood and Savitri accompanied him. After chopping wood for a while, Satyavan complained of a headache and went to sleep resting his head on his wife's lap.

Soon Savitri saw a man with 'the brilliance of the sun, red eyes, with a rope in hand.' Savitri asked him who he was. He replied he was Yama (the god of death) and that he had come to take away Satyavan as his life span on earth had ended.

He took the 'life' out of Satyavan, tied it with his rope and started back. Savitri followed him, conversing with him all the while. She praised his sense of justice and kindness. She also expressed her desire to be with her husband even after death.

Pleased with her devotion, Yama granted her three boons. Savitri first asked for her parents-in-law's sight to be restored. This was granted. She then asked that they get back their kingdom and riches. This was also granted. Finally Savitri asked to be blessed with a hundred sons. Yama without hesitation agreed to her last request. That was when Savitri asked a valid question – how could she, a faithful wife, get a hundred sons without her husband? Yama was at his wits' end to think of a solution to this dilemma. He could not withdraw his boon and at the same time Savitri had a valid point. He therefore restored Satyavan his life and granted him 400 years on earth.

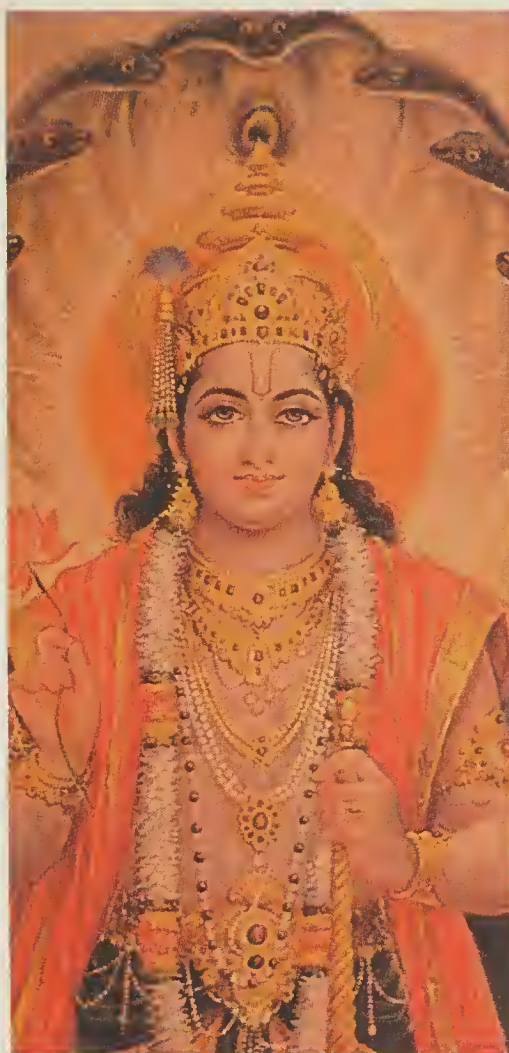
Satyavan lived once again, his parents got back their sight, kingdom and riches. To this day married Hindu women celebrate Savitri's triumph over Yama and her feat of retrieving her husband from 'death.' In Tamil Nadu, the day is celebrated as Karadayan Nombu (See Festivals) where women tie a symbolic yellow string around their necks for the longevity of their husbands.

SRISAILAM

The ancient Mallikarjuna temple at Srisaillam is one of the twelve jyotirlingas.

The legend goes that Chandravati, daughter of a local king of Chandrapuram, one of the kingdoms on the banks of the Krishna river was so lovely that her own father fell in love with her. Fearing his evil intentions, she left her home and stayed at Srisaillam.

She had a cow which used to let her milk flow over a black stone. One night Lord Shiva appeared to the princess in a dream and told her that he had manifested himself in the same stone (linga). The princess installed the Shivalinga and constructed a



Vishnu with Adishesha

temple there. She worshipped the deity with mallika (jasmine flowers) every day and the deity came to be known as Mallikarjuna (See Literature: Kannada).

THANJAVUR

According to legend, a Chola king was afflicted by leprosy which, according to his teacher Haradatta, was due to a curse from his previous birth as a hunter, when he had injured several animals. The guru recommended that he should propitiate the gods by constructing a Shiva temple and installing a Shivalinga brought from Narmada. He told him to build another temple for the goddess Brihannayaki and a Nandi (bull).

The king, along with 64 merchants, went to the Narmada river. When he took the linga out of the water, it began to grow. Hence it was named Brihadiswara (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Temples). The temple was constructed by a craftsman, Soma Verma, over a period of 12 years. The story goes that when the temple was completed the king took a bath in the adjoining tank and was cured of leprosy.

TIRUPATI

The Venkateswara temple – also called Venkatachalapati or Balaji – at Tirumala lies 849 m above sea level while the town of Tirupati is at the foot of the hill. The undulating eastern ghats near Tirupati resemble the serpent, Adishesha, and the seven hills of Tirupati resemble its seven hoods. Hence Tirumala is also called Seshachala or the abode of Adishesha.

According to the *Padma Purana*, at a sacrifice performed by Manu, a dispute arose among the scholars as to who was supreme in the trinity – Shiva, Vishnu or Brahma. Sage Bhrigu was asked to determine the supremacy. Bhrigu first went to Kailasa and after securing admission found Shiva playing with his consort Parvati. Shiva paid no attention to Bhrigu. Then Bhrigu went to Brahma, who did not even receive him. The sage then called on Vishnu, who was fast asleep. Enraged, the sage kicked Vishnu on his chest. Lakshmi, who was resting on Vishnu's chest, also received the kick.

Instead of being enraged at Bhrigu's impatience, Vishnu apologised to Bhrigu for being asleep. He preserved Bhrigu's footprint on his chest, as a Sri-vatsa (mark of Vishnu). Lakshmi, however, could not take Bhrigu's insult lightly and she left Vaikuntha in disgust.

Unable to bear the separation from Lakshmi, Vishnu came to Seshachala as Adi Varaha (See Religion: Hinduism – Vishnu) carrying Mother Earth on his tusk after rescuing her from the ocean. After a long time, in order to please a devotee, he assumed the form of Srinivasa with Lakshmi on his chest and thereafter he remained under the earth.

Legend goes that the cows of a local king went grazing and returned with empty udders, having disposed of their milk somewhere. The intrigued king followed and saw the cows squirting milk on a particular spot. He dug up the place and found the form of Srinivasa and built the Tirumala temple over it.



NATURE

Prakriti

**In India, Nature and
religion are inextricably woven together.
Mountains, rivers, trees, even
animals and birds are
worshipped, thus leading
to spontaneous conservation
of the environment**

The vast subcontinent of India is endowed with almost every type of terrain and the natural wealth that goes with it: the world's highest mountains, long coast-lines, a variety of forests including precious rain forests, deserts and a web of great and small river systems. The flora and fauna, the medicinal systems, the distinct lifestyles, myth, legend, literature and folklore that evolved from this natural bounty are integral to Indian life.

AMPHIBIANS/FISH/REPTILES

BOMBAY DUCK

A rather odd fish, just 25 cm in length with a gaudy translucent body while it is alive. Although it is found in shallow water it has many features of deep sea fish: soft non-calcareous bones, large jaw and jelly-like flesh with no real muscles. It is a voracious eater, sometimes gulping down fish longer than its body and its stomach is often distended after a feed.

Bombay Duck is found on the west coast from Diu to Hirna and on the Andhra, Orissa and Bengal coasts in the east. It is excellent dried – which is how it is mostly eaten.

DOCTOR FISH

A fish which feeds off particles from the mouths of larger fish. Even carnivorous, poisonous fish like the Moray eel and Scorpion fish do not harm the Doctor fish. It 'treats' several patients in an hour and its relationship with other fish is a perfect example of symbiosis or mutual understanding in the animal world. These fish are found off the west coast of India.

HILSA

The *Hilsa ilisha* or Indian Shad is the only anadromous Indian fish (one which migrates from the sea up rivers to breed). It breeds in July and August in the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Godavari, Indus, Krishna and Narmada rivers. It was once believed that the fish returned to the sea immediately after spawning but a study of the Ganga Hilsa showed that they remain in the river till the young fish mature. During spawning the fish feed only sparingly on green algae. The fertilized eggs have an oil globule which makes them float on the surface of the water, from where they are collected and grown in nursery ponds for their high commercial value. A single female lays between 280,000 to 1,800,000 eggs per sea-

son but the mortality rate is high. The female of the species is bigger than the male.

COMMON INDIAN TOAD

The largest of the toad species found in India. With a length of about 16 mm and a dry warty skin, it lives even in altitudes of 3,048 m in damp places near streams. Although it is silent for the greater part of the year, toad song reaches a crescendo during the monsoon, which is mating season. Interestingly, the male of the species is smaller than the female and more numerous. Toads come out in the evening to catch their prey and if provoked they secrete a milky fluid which irritates human skin.

TREE FROG

It is easy to identify the Tree Frog – the tips of its digits expand into discs. Most of these frogs found mainly in wet, hilly regions, live in trees but some have become ground dwellers.

The most spectacular member of this family is the Malabar Tree Frog. It has long, fully webbed digits which it extends when it jumps from tree to tree. This creates a parachute effect, as if the frog is gliding through the air.

One of the Navagrahas, Shukra or Venus (See Cosmos: Astrology, Calendar) rides Mandooka, the frog. Mandooka symbolises those who dwell in perfect harmony and contentment and are above pettiness.

MONITOR LIZARD

Despite the Monitor being the world's largest and heaviest lizard, it is a good runner and swimmer and the smaller ones are excellent climbers. It eats birds, rodents, molluscs and carrion and relishes crocodile, bird and turtle eggs.

India has four species of Monitors but only the Common Indian Monitor is widely distributed. The Indian Water Monitor is the second largest in the world. It is found in wet, marshy forests and river banks and often swims far into the sea in search of food. Like other creatures in the wild, Monitors are also on the endangered list because of ruthless slaughter for their skin.

CROCODILE

Of the 22 species of crocodile, three are found in India – Mugger or Marsh Crocodile, the Saltwater Crocodile and the Gharial.

Equally at home on land and water, the crocodile is a superb hunter. It has a highly developed sense of smell, hearing and vision and it can detect prey by tactile and possibly chemical receptors in the jaw. Crocodiles, if left alone, live for over a

hundred years. They are more active by night, spending the day basking in the sun or submerged for several hours in water without breathing.

Though trade in all three Indian species is banned, they have been ruthlessly hunted to near extinction for their skin. The Gharial with the peculiar bump at the end of its nose is the rarest Asian crocodile. It is found in the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi and Chambal rivers.

KING COBRA

Found in evergreen forests of the Western Ghats, Orissa, Bihar, Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the King Cobra grows up to 5 m. Its venom is not very toxic but because of the large quantity, (upto 7 cc), it can kill an elephant. When threatened, it puts up a splendid defence, raising its hood and charging the attacker with open mouth. It is said to be the only snake in the world that builds a nest in which the female lays her eggs which she guards for 60 or more days till they hatch. During this period she usually does not eat.

In Hindu mythology, it is said that Shesha Naga, the King Cobra, was asked to support the world on his hood by Brahma because of his righteousness. Every time he shakes his head, the earth quakes.

Shesha Naga is also the 'couch' on which Vishnu rests during intervals of creation (Ananta Sayana). He also served as a rope with which the Ocean was churned (See Religion: Hinduism – Kshirasagara Manthana).

PYTHON

Of the two species of Python found in India – the Indian Rock Python and the Reticulated Python – the latter is the longest snake in the world. Sluggish, capable of going without a meal for days, pythons are found in swampy areas mainly in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

These nocturnal reptiles eat warm-blooded animals like rats, birds and civets and larger specimens have been known to swallow a fullgrown leopard and even a man! They rest for several days after a heavy meal and sometimes months elapse before they hunt again.

Pythons are non-venomous snakes. They stalk and seize their prey but do not crush it to death as is commonly believed. Instead they squeeze the victim till it dies of suffocation.

Like most snakes they are hunted for their skin and certain tribes even eat them.

VIPERS

Of all the species of vipers found in India the two most venomous are the Russel's



Elephants, the largest land mammals

and the Sawscaled.

The Russel's Viper, a beautiful yellow and brown snake, grows to 2 m. The Saw-scaled Viper is protected by its small size: it grows to only 50 to 80 cm. Both eat rats, small birds, frogs and scorpions. The Russel's give birth to 20 to 40 young at a time and the Sawscaled four to eight. Anti-venom serum from Sawscaled Vipers is made in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.

The Levantine Vipers of eastern Europe are found in parts of Kashmir but little is known about them. Sixteen species of Pit Vipers are also found here, so called because of the pair of pits between the eyes and nostrils which are heat sensitive, enabling them to reach warm blooded prey even at night.

Kashmir was a major centre of serpent worship and the snake Nila was supposed to be the guardian of the valley. Her abode in Nila Kunda, the source of the river Vitas-ta (Jhelum) and the sacred fount of Nila in later times became known as Ver Naga. The town of Anantanag too is named after a celestial snake, Shesha-Anantanag.

ANIMALS

DUGONGS

A strange looking animal, also called the Sea Cow. The largest dugong population exists in the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Bay. Small groups have also been found in the Andamans and the Gulf of Kutch. They feed on meadows of sea grass in the shallows.

Growing to 3 m and 400 kg, dugongs swim in family groups of two parents and one offspring, keeping reasonably close to the coast. Their attachment for each other often results in the capture of the entire family if one of its members is netted or harpooned.

GANGETIC DOLPHIN

Perhaps the most loved of water animals, the dolphin inspired wonderful stories based on true life incidents but the Indian Gangetic River Dolphin is now on the endangered list. The Indian Dolphins have weak eyesight as they live in turbid, silt-laden waters. They eat fish and crayfish

which they find by echo location.

From the coastal waters of Sri Lanka to the marshes of the Sunderbans there are two common species – the Plumbeous Dolphin and the Finless Black Porpoise. Unlike the freshwater species they have good vision, though they too use a sonar system for hunting. The Common Dolphin, found off the coast of south India holds the record for speed in water, reaching upto 30 knots or 55.5 km per hour.

BANDICOOT RAT

The most serious rodent pests in Asian countries are the Indian Bandicoot and the Lesser Bandicoot. Large, weighing over a kilo, the grey furry Bandicoot is a fearsome sight.

The grain godowns in Calcutta are so greatly infested by Bandicoots that it is estimated that in a godown of 244 sq m they eat 4,226 kg grain a year, which is enough to feed 7,000 people for a day! Lesser Bandicoots also exploit crops in the field, travelling great distances to find ripe grain

which they store in bulk underground. Bandicoots build up fat reserves when food is abundant and may weigh up to twice their normal weight. This helps them survive the months of drought when they live underground, feeding on food reserves and tubers. The female produces a litter of 8 to 19 young.

ASIATIC WILD ASS

The only home of the Asiatic Wild Ass is the inhospitable terrain of the Little Rann of Kutch. Considerably taller and much sturdier than the domestic donkey, Wild Asses have been used by the Army as draft animals and to breed mules for mountain transport. They live in mixed troops of 10 to 30 animals except for 2 or 3 months in the year, after the young are born, when the mare, accompanied by the foals, lives apart.

BEARS

India has three kinds of bear – the Sloth Bear, Himalayan Black Bear and the Brown Bear.

The Sloth Bear, commonly seen performing tricks on streets, is the smallest of the species. It lives in the forests of the plains or lowlands, feeding mainly on insect larvae through mouths which are modified for suction. It can close its nostrils at will. Unlike other bears, the Sloth mates for life. It does not hibernate.

The Himalayan Black Bear live in the broad-leaved deciduous forests of Assam and the Himalayas. The Brown Bear lives on the higher Himalayan slopes. Like the Black Bear, it is largely herbivorous though some do learn to kill. Himalayan species have naked soled feet for tree climbing.

Jambuvant was the king of the bears in the Ramayana (See Religions: Hinduism – Epics). His army helped Rama fight Ravana. Besides being a warrior, Jambuvant was attributed with great wisdom and was one of Rama's advisors. For his help, Rama granted him the boon of invulnerability against all except his father.

In Vishnu's next avatar (incarnation) as Krishna, Jambuvant gained possession of a gem called the Syamantaka which could protect the virtuous wearer and destroy a wicked owner. Krishna and Jambuvant fought over this gem which the wise old bear finally surrendered. He married his daughter Jambavati to Krishna.

BHARAL

Found high on the Tibetan Plateau and around the peaks of Nanda Devi and Tri-shul, the male of the species has a handsome slate-blue coat, a black chest and

massive sweeping horns. Since it is the special prey of the Wolf and the Snow Leopard, it lives well above the timber line – 3,500 m to 5,000 m up in the Himalayas.

Classified in 1833, the Bharal has characteristics of both sheep and goats, living in social herds of 5 to 20. When not in rut the males live in all-male bands. The Bharal are ranked in the herd by the size of their magnificent horns and bodies and their conspicuous coats which help the males evaluate each other. In a rare fight for dominance, the subjugated male rubs his face on the rump of the dominant animal in a unique gesture of friendship.

BISON

The Indian Bison or Gaur is one of the world's most impressive wild oxen. The adult male weighs up to 1000 kg and stands 190 cm at the shoulder. Both the male and female have a pair of upswept, cylindrical horns which grow up to 80 cm in length.

The Gaur lives in hilly tracts with extensive forest cover, which is being destroyed (and the Gaurs' number decimated) by deforestation. The Gaur is herbivorous and despite its size, extremely shy and retiring, feeding mostly at night. It lives in small herds, dominated by an old cow. Like all oxen, it has poor eyesight but an acute sense of smell alerts it to predators. A calf is born after a gestation period of nine months.

BLACK BUCK

Legend has it that at the cost of their lives, the Bishnois of Rajasthan fought to protect the fleet-footed Black Buck from royal hunters. This beautiful animal develops a striking black and white pattern after reaching maturity at the age of three. In summer, its colour fades to a pale brown. It is found in a few, scattered herds, in semi-desert and open grasslands where it grazes on cereal crops and lives in gregarious herds of 10 to 30.

BARASINGHA

Large deer with the stags weighing 170 kg or more and a shoulder height of 125 cm. The antlers sweep upwards for more than half their length before branching into 12 tines, from which their Hindi name *Barasingha* is derived.

At one time these deer ranged through the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra basins and as far south as the Godavari. Today they are seen only in a few reserves – Kaziranga, Dudwa in UP and Sukla Phanta in Nepal. These reserves support a total of about 3,000 animals.

These are social animals, often seen in herds of a hundred. They prefer to graze

near water and are threatened because their natural habitat has been given over almost completely to agriculture.

Kautilya had special laws for horned animals (See History: Dynasties – Mauryas). He prescribed that the owner of such an animal was to be punished if it caused the injury or death of a man. But when a person caused the death of the animal he had not only to pay a fine equal to the value of the destroyed animal but also to make up its value to its owner. This law held good for tusked animals as well.

CHEVROTAIN

A deer so small (12" high) that it is often called the Mouse Deer. The male has a pair of downward-pointing canines that look like tiny tusks. This timid and gentle creature lives in mixed evergreen and deciduous forests. It evades predators by hiding under bushes and has even been seen darting up the trunk of a tree when chased by dogs!

A solitary creature, it feeds both day and night on fruit and vegetation found on the ground and when it is hot or thirsty it pants like a dog. It is a silent animal and there is no call by which it is known. The Mouse Deer has a rather peculiar habit – it sometimes lies upside down in the hollow of a tree.

MUNTJAC OR BARKING DEER

Called Kakar, it has short, single stemmed antlers meeting in a ridge on the nose. It is a small creature, growing to a height of 50 to 75 cm. Muntjac live in pairs in a small home range where, unlike other deer, they breed through the year. The Indian species is also remarkable in having the smallest number of chromosomes in any mammal, the female having six and the male, seven. They live in thickly wooded hilly country and are quite courageous and aggressive, even fighting leopards if attacked.

The Muntjac has a doglike alarm bark from which it gets its name, Barking Deer.

MUSK DEER

Called Kastura Mushk in Hindi, it is classified somewhere between the deer and antelope families. A little creature, standing just 20" at the shoulder and harmless, it lives on snow mountain slopes and birch forests. These shy creatures live singly or in pairs, scraping out a shallow in which they live during the day. They come out to feed on lichen and grass morning and evening. Hunted for their precious musk gland (used in the manufacture of perfumes), these creatures are highly endangered.

CATS

Apart from the common, domestic cat, a number of interesting species are found in India. The Fishing Cat uses its well-developed webbed forefeet to catch fish. It lives in forests up to 1,500 m in the Himalayas. Bengal, UP, Orissa and the west coast and in grassy swamps and reed beds near rivers and tidal creeks. It preys on any animal or bird it can catch.

The Marbled Cat is about 3 ft in length, half of which is tail! With its striped and spotted coat, this cat looks like a smaller version of the Clouded Leopard.

The Leopard Cat is a rather small animal with the total length of its head and body just under 2 ft, in which its tail accounts for more than half. It is found in forests throughout the country. It eats small animals and birds. Other cats found in India are the Golden, Jungle and Desert Cats.

ASIATIC LION

This magnificent beast once roamed all of central and north India but is now confined to a small, isolated pocket in the teak forest of Gir in Kathiawar, numbering no more than 200.

Parvati, Shiva's wife, rides the lion (Simha) in her benign form, Vidya Maya. Simha is a zodiac sign corresponding to the western Leo (See Cosmos: Astrology). Buddha, one of the Navagrahas or the nine planetary deities worshipped together in the temples, also rides upon a lion.

CIVETS

Civets are solitary, nocturnal animals with elongated weasel-like bodies. Their diet is completely carnivorous and after spending their day in hiding they come out in the dark to hunt small birds, mammals and reptiles. Their snouts are particularly long, housing 32 to 34 teeth.

The Palm Civet, found in India, with a tail as long as its body is commonly called the Toddy Cat due to its preference for fermented toddy. Its claws are well-adapted for climbing. If disturbed, the Palm Civet leaves behind a foul odour.

CLOUDED LEOPARD

About the same size as the Snow Leopard, the Clouded Leopard weighs about 40 to 45 lbs. It has enormous upper canine teeth which are closest amongst living cats to the great tusks of the extinct Sabre-toothed Tiger. The largely arboreal Clouded Leopard is found in dense evergreen Himalayan forests and in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. It hunts by night. Its teeth help it seize relatively large animals.

LEOPARD

Amazingly adaptable, leopards, the most versatile of the cat family are found from the snowline to sea level, in dry arid deserts and rain forests.

Unlike tigers, they can live on small prey like birds and rodents. Considerably slimmer than the tiger they are incredibly supple and agile and can quite easily drag their kill, almost twice their body weight, up a perpendicular tree trunk. Leopards are excellent swimmers and use their tail in the manner of a crocodile. Loss of habitat and poaching has placed the leopard on the endangered list.

In mythology, Bhairava, a form of Shiva, is the lord of the cremation grounds and rides on the back of a leopard.

SNOW LEOPARD

One of the most beautiful but elusive cats, the Snow Leopard or Ounce is found in the high rocky terrain of the Himalayas above 12,000 ft. It hunts at night, preying on wild sheep and goats, musk deer, hare, marmots and other rodents. With the onset of winter, the Snow Leopard comes down to altitudes as low as 6,000 ft and establishes its territory near human settlements. It is on the list of highly endangered animals.

TIGER

The tiger evokes excitement like no other animal does. Sleek, graceful, silent and secretive, tigers have become synonymous with power, aggression and beauty.

The tiger population has rapidly declined from approximately 40,000 at the start of the century to less than 1,400 in 1972. This is largely due to excessive hunting. Once a common sight across the length and breadth of the country, tigers are now found only in sanctuaries and National Parks like Corbett, Kanha, Ranthambore and Sariska.

In 1972, Project Tiger was launched in nine reserves, as an attempt at redressal. Tigers now number approximately 4,000.

HOOLOCK GIBBON

Called Uluk in Hindi, the Hoolock or Whitebrowed Gibbon is the only ape found in India. It is a rather small tailless animal, standing around 3 ft high with long arms, more than twice the length of its legs.

Hoolocks live in hill forests in close knit family groups of about six, each with a distinct territory in the forests of Assam. A family follows the same trail every day in its search of fruit, insects, leaves, grubs and spiders.

The father is content with a single mate and the mother takes great care of her young. The mating season is early in the

monsoon and the young are born in the cold weather between December and March. These apes are much more agile than their larger relatives and walk upright with their arms stretched out to maintain balance. The Hoolock has a characteristic huk-huk-huk whooping call from which it is said to get its name.

MACAQUES

The monkey that you see in tinsel and rags, performing tricks on the street is the Rhesus Macaque, the commonest monkey in India. It is found in jungles and in cities and over a period of time adapts to human beings. It forages for food mostly on the ground and as such is less dependant on trees than other macaques.

The rarest macaque is the Lion-tailed Macaque of the Silent Valley rain forest in Kerala. With its black face framed by a fringe of golden fur and a long tail that looks much like a lion's, this shy, secretive monkey, is one of endangered species because its habitat is rapidly disappearing.

LANGURS

Langurs derive their name from the Sanskrit 'Langulin' or long-tailed. Five species are found in the Indian subcontinent from altitudes of 4,500 m to about sea level. The commonest is the Hanuman Langur and the rarest and most recently discovered, is the Golden Langur found in northwest Assam. The others are the Capped, Nilgiri and Purplefaced Langurs, found essentially in Sri Lanka.

Langurs live in two kinds of social groups – bisexual mixed reproductive groups or all male groups which some times attack the mixed groups and drive away the dominant male. When this happens, the invading male asserts his supremacy by killing as many nurslings as possible which brings the mother back into the sexual cycle.

The Ramayana epic has a legend about Hanuman, Rama's langur devotee in the battle against Ravana, who set Lanka on fire with his tail (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana). The celibate Hanuman is popularly worshipped as the strong protector, Bajrang Bali.

SLOW LORIS AND SLENDER LORIS

The Slow Loris (Sharmindi Billi, shy cat, in Hindi) is a small nocturnal creature with enormous eyes and a stump for a tail. Its head is almost as big as its body – 1 ft to 1.4 ft. Found in the dense forests of Assam and Chittagong, this shy animal is rarely seen and little is known about its habits. During the day the Slow Loris sleeps curled up like a ball. It eats fruit, leaves and insects hang-

ing upside down from the branch of a tree.

The Slender Loris is even smaller than the Slow Loris, a mere 8" to 10" in length, with no tail. It rarely weighs more than 10 to 12 oz. It is found in south India and has the same nocturnal, secretive habits as the Slow Loris.

ELEPHANT

This huge, tusked, thick-skinned mammal uses its long flexible trunk rather like a human being uses his hands. Its natural habitat is in the semi-tropical forests of Assam, north Bihar, UP, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala which has the famous Periyar elephant reserve. Elephants have long been domesticated and used to shift logs and shunt railway wagons. The forest department too uses elephants to carry tourists. Their number has declined alarmingly over the last decade because of loss of habitat and poaching for the ivory trade.

A creation myth in the *Sathapatha Brahmana* tells how the elephant was made. Aditi's eighth son, Martanda was born deformed. When Aditi shaped him, her seven sons threw away the spare flesh which became the elephant. Because of this creation, the elephant is said to partake of the nature of man. The elephant is also associated with rain clouds and the Sanskrit word naga means both elephant and cloud.

Elephants were widely used as transport and war animals and were a symbol of power and wealth. In the Post Vedic period, the king himself would consecrate the state elephant with a ritual baptism and a special staff was allocated to Airavata, the white elephant which took part in royal pilgrimages and festivals. The *Agni Purana* also mentions a rite in which a figure of an elephant is made from mud taken from an anthill. The elephant-headed god Ganesha is the most beloved and popular of Hindu deities (See Religion: Hinduism; Vedic Gods – Ganesha).

RHINOCEROS

Of the five species of rhinoceros in the world, only the Greater Onehorned Indian Rhino is found here. It is now an endangered species with a population of less than 1,500, restricted almost entirely to eight small protected areas in Assam, West Bengal and Nepal, notably the Kaziranga National Park in Assam.

Both the male and female have a single horn (of hardened hair) on the nose which grows 15 to 45 cm in length. The rhino is hunted for this horn which is believed to be an aphrodisiac. It also has a pair of tusk-like lower incisors which it uses in combat, in preference to the horn.



The Royal Bengal Tiger

These herbivores are solitary by nature and move around singly or in small groups with the most permanent association being between the cow and her calf.

HEDGEHOGS

These relatively primitive mammals hunt at night by smell for insects. There are four species on the subcontinent: The Pale and the Longeared Hedgehog, in the Rann of Kutch and the Afghan and the Blanford in the dry foothills west of the Indus valley. Hedgehogs can live in arid environments where they are active in the summer and monsoon and generally hibernate in winter in colder regions.

During the day, desert Hedgehogs sleep in burrows or in crevices in the rocks. They are voracious eaters, even attacking and overcoming venomous snakes and scorpions, though they also eat fruit, eggs and nestlings. When approached or threatened, the hedgehog rolls itself into a tight ball. Occasionally though, a wolf is swift enough to catch it before its defence mechanism comes into play.

INDIAN WILD DOG

A pack animal, called Dhole in Hindi. The pack, an extended family of 5 to 12 animals, is maintained at a fairly constant number as breeding is restricted to one female per pack. They hunt in the morning and evening. Prey includes chital, hare, deer and even larger animals which they attack on the rump and flank. Wild Dogs communicate by whistling, mainly to reassemble the pack after they have dispersed. Their community spirit is seen in the fact that the

entire pack participates in feeding the lactating bitch and her pups. Dholes are poisoned by jungle dwellers. As a result, they have dwindled vastly in numbers.

WOLF

The Indian Wolf is smaller and shorter-haired than its cousins in north America and Eurasia.

In the last 50 years with the spread of agriculture the wolf population has lost much of its habitat. They now survive only in the remoter regions of Rajasthan, Gilgit and Ladakh. They are often killed by man as they are a threat to his flock.

Wolves hunt essentially at night, covering distances of 20 km in search of prey. During the day they shelter in natural rock caves or burrows which they excavate. Recent studies show that wolves mate for life. The male helps to feed the pups when they are young. The lifespan of a wolf is 15 years.

Indian Dogs

KOMBAI

The small town of Kombai in Madurai is the home the famous Kombai or Poligar dog. Poligars were rulers of a palayam, a small territory (See History: Chronology – Veerapandi Kattabomman). Kombais are very powerful, muscular dogs with incredible speed. In days gone by they were used for hunting and guarding. They are very gentle with children and make perfect pets.

MUDHOL HOUND

Known as the Greyhound of Maharashtra, it is smaller than the English Greyhound and makes a good watchdog. The Mudhol is usually bred and sold by a nomadic tribe called the Vadharis. Mudhol hounds are sleek, elegant, black and tan dogs. A pointed head, long muscular neck and bright, intelligent eyes characterise the Mudhol. With well-muscled shoulders and thighs and neat, compact feet, these hounds weigh about 9 to 14 kgs.

RAJAPALAYAM

A beautiful ivory-coloured dog from Tamil Nadu, it weighs about 120 lbs and looks somewhat like the Great Dane. It has a deep chest, a pink nose and golden eyes. It is a hunting dog, good at cornering and killing wild boar.

RAMPUR HOUND

Rampur hounds, said to be of Persian Greyhound descent were very popular with the Mughals. The Rampur hound is very handsome with its sleek body, strong skull and deep chest.



Uluka the Owl, goddess Lakshmi's vahana or vehicle

BIRDS

BAYA WEAVER BIRD

The most amazing thing about the Baya or Weaver Bird is its tubular, pendant nest. Built by the male Baya with nothing but grass, it has chambers within chambers and hangs from Palm and Babul trees, shaped somewhat like the *been* (snake charmer's flute). It is strongly tied at the base and can withstand wind and rain. The males start building after the first rains and when it is half complete, the females arrive to inspect her future home. When a nest is selected that female pairs with the male who has built it. While the female lays eggs and incubates them, the male gets busy building another nest for another female to inspect. Thus during the season, the male has a harem of three to four hens!

The male Baya is coloured a bright yellow with brown stripes during the mating season but after that it reverts to the female's dull brown.

Bayas eat seeds like millet but during the monsoon they eat insects too.

BLACK DRONGO

Also called Kotwal and Bhujanga, a jet-black bird, about the size of and as commonly found as a mynah, but with a long forked tail. It is totally fearless and when threatened, can attack much larger birds. The Drongo lives on insects which it catches in flight or on the ground. It has short legs and cannot hop or walk on the ground.

The Drongo seldom harms smaller birds or mammals. Indeed weaker birds like doves and orioles build their nests close to the Drongo's, which is a flimsy cup of woven roots positioned in the fork of a branch. It is completely open but Drongos themselves are known to be ferociously protective of their nests. The young are raised during the monsoon.

Two other species of this bird are found in India: the Rackettailed and Whitebellied Drongos.

BLACK OR KING VULTURE

Called Raj gidh in Hindi, this huge black, turkey-like vulture has a deep scarlet naked head, neck and legs. Quite ungainly on the ground but graceful in flight, this scavenger is usually very timid and cowardly and snatches its meat where opportunity permits. Its large nest is built atop a tree, often close to human habitation.

BULBUL

Among the prettiest garden birds, the Bulbul has such a pleasing call that most people mistake it for a songbird. The commonest Bulbul is the Redvented, with a bright crimson patch below the root of its

tail and a white rump, very noticeable in flight, and a crested black head. Bulbuls usually make their cupshaped nests in hedges but they also nest in bushes and trees. The nest, made of rootlets is plastered outside with cobwebs. They eat insects, fruit, berries and vegetables like peas.

Other varieties are the Whitecheeked, Redwhiskered and Whitebrowed Bulbul.

BUSTARD

Five species of Bustard are found in India of which two are migratory. The Great Indian Bustard is the largest. Breeding is slow as the birds do not mature till about three to five years and then lay a solitary egg. During breeding the male develops an air sac in the neck which when inflated emits a loud boom. Bustards are polygamous and rather shy birds with males, females and young forming separate groups. However, the Bengal Florican lays four to six eggs at a time. It is found mainly in the riverine forests of Assam.

The Bustard is on the verge of extinction due to diminishing natural habitat.

COMMON SWALLOW

The free-wheeling Swallow (Ababil in Hindi) is metallic blue on top and pale pink underneath. It is a common sight in most places, particularly where there is water. It catches insects in flight and from the ground, twisting and turning with its deep forked tail. Swallows roost in large congregations amongst reed beds standing in water. Their diet consists mostly of flies and midges. Swallows build nests of mud reinforced with grass against beams and rafters in or outside houses. Both parents share domestic duties.

CRANES

These longlegged birds are often seen feeding in marshes or croplands on vegetable or animal food. Of the total 14 to 15 existing species, six are seen in India: the Sarus, the Adjutant, the Common Crane, the Demoiselle (abundant winter visitor to south and central India) and the highly endangered Siberian Crane, seen only at the Keoladeo Ghana sanctuary at Bharatpur (only five were sighted in 1991). The Black-necked Crane which breeds in Ladakh and Tibet is also on the endangered list.

Cranes are believed to mate for life, and their loyalty to each other is the source of their popular folklore.

CUCKOO

There are 21 species of cuckoo varying in size from the sparrow-sized Violet Cuckoo to the 60 cm Large Greenbilled. Most cuckoos are rather dull-coloured and are more easily distinguished by their loud piercing

call though some, like the Emerald and Violet Cuckoo have resplendent plumage. The outer toe of the cuckoo's foot is reversible.

Some cuckoos are parasitic. Non-parasitic cuckoos are rather sluggish, clumsy birds, the most familiar of which is the Crow Pheasant (Kuka in Hindi) unique for its long straight claw on the hind toe. The birds build their own nests and are devoted parents though they do destroy other young and eggs. One of the species, the Red faced Malkoha is on the verge of extinction.

They eat caterpillars and some prefer the hairy ones. Though cuckoos usually choose a crow's nest to lay their eggs, they are not averse to choosing the nest of a smaller bird. The foster parents thus spend an exhausting period trying to raise a fledgeling many times their size.

GOLDEN ORIOLE

A bright golden yellow with black wings and tail and a conspicuous streak through its eyes, the Golden Oriole (Peelak in Hindi) is found practically all over the country – even in the Himalayas up to a height of 1,500 m – except in Assam. It lives in open but lightly wooded areas and is partial to large groves around villages and gardens and even along roadsides. Its nest is a beautifully woven deep cup of grass and fibres, bound with cobweb and suspended hammock-like in the hidden fork of a leafy tree. Both parents raise the young.

GOLDENBACKED WOODPECKER

With its gold and black plumage this woodpecker, called Katphora in Hindi, is found throughout the country. It lives in open but slightly wooded areas and favours mango groves and coconut plantations. It chisels away at rotten wood for beetles and other insects. It forages for black ants on the ground and also feeds on fruit and nectar. Its nest is an unlined, self-created hollow in a tree stem or branch. Both parents look after their young.

GREAT INDIAN HORNED OWL

A large brown owl (Ghughu in Hindi) with large, yellow, forward looking eyes and unique feathered legs. It lives in well-wooded but open country and is rarely found in a thick forest. Favourite haunts include rocky hillocks and ravines and steep, pitted banks of rivers and streams. It has a distinct, penetrating bu-bo call. It eats small mammals, birds, reptiles and some large insects, fish and crabs. Cherished by farmers for the number of mice it eats, this owl does not nest but lays its eggs on bare soil in a natural recess in an earth bank, on a ledge

or cliff or under a bush.

INDIAN ROBIN

The sprightly Indian Robin (Kalchuri in Hindi) is a small black bird with a white patch on its wing and a rusty red patch under its tail. Found throughout the country, it is a familiar bird in gardens and scrubland around towns and villages. It bobs its tail cheekily as it hops about in search of insects. It locates its nest, made of rootlets and rubbish and lined with feathers and hair, under a stone, in a broken pot, a hole in a tree stump or in the earth.

JUNGLE BABBLER

An extremely noisy bird, hopping in flocks, about the ground or in the trees. A common sight in most gardens, Jungle Babblers (Saat Bhai) chatter incessantly when searching for food which could be spiders, cockroaches and other insects. They also eat wild figs, berries and grain. There is no special nesting season.

The Common, Slatyheaded, Scimitar, Rufousbellied, Yelloweyed, Spotted and Quaker Babblers are the other varieties commonly seen in India.

KINGFISHER

Found in many sizes and colours, the smallest is the Threetoed Forest Kingfisher and the largest, nearly as large as a pigeon, is the Storkbilled Kingfisher. Their colours range from black and white to brilliant blues and purples. Kingfishers are fantastic divers and often come up with fish almost as large as themselves! They live by freshwater streams, lakes, lagoons and mangrove swamps.

Not all kingfishers are fish-eaters. Some, like the Whitebreasted Kingfisher live mainly on insects.

Kingfishers live in tunnels along the banks of a lake or in termite mounds and abandoned tree nests.

MALABAR PIED HORNBILL

A heavy, ungainly bird with a large casque and ponderous wax-yellow and black hornshaped bill. Plentiful at one time, these birds (Dhanchuri, Suleiman murghi in Hindi) are noisy and favour fruitladen trees in lightly wooded areas. They also eat insects, lizards, mice and baby birds. Hornbills nest in tree hollows. When it is time for the female to lay eggs and incubate them, she is walled up inside the hole with bird droppings. Only a small slit is left through which the male feeds her during the entire incubation. Once the young are born, the wall is broken down and both parents share in the raising of the young.

MALABAR WHISTLING THRUSH

A hill bird, the Malabar Whistling Thrush (Kastura in Hindi) is a shimmering blue-black with a glistening cobalt blue patch on its forehead, black bill and legs. Its call, particularly during the mating season sounds human. It whistles a series of high and low notes at random, for which it is nicknamed the Idle Schoolboy. It eats mostly water insects, shelling them on the rocks. It builds a nest of roots, grass and mud on high ledges and precipices.

MYNA

A common sight in most gardens, the Myna always lives near people. A perky, dark brown bird with white marked wings and a yellow patch around the eye, this omnivore eats anything from insects and fruit to leftover kitchen scraps. It follows the plough to devour insects thrown up by the movement. Its nest, an untidy clutter of twigs, paper and any rubbish it can find, is usually built on a tree or a wall. In cities, mynas build their nests on telegraph poles and electric wires.

OWLS

There are 29 species of owl in India, varying in size from the Eagle Owl, which is larger than a kite, to the Pygmy Owlet which is about the size of a sparrow.

They are mostly nocturnal. Owls swallow their food whole and cast up the indigestible parts (bones, feathers and so on) in the form of pellets.

Owls are swift and silent hunters, helped by their keen hearing and vision. They relentlessly hunt rodents, the worst agricultural menace today.

Uluka or Pechaka in Hindi, the Owl is the vahana (vehicle) of Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and prosperity and is revered as a symbol of wisdom.

PARADISE FLYCATCHER

One of the most spectacular birds of the Indian subcontinent, the Paradise Flycatcher (Shah Bulbul or Dudhraj in Hindi) is a silvery white bird with a metallic black crested head and a long sweeping tail with ribbonlike feathers. It frequents shady groves and gardens and lightly forested areas and is quite used to the presence of human beings. The male bird is a swift and spectacular aerobat. The Flycatcher makes a nest of fine grass and fibres plastered with cobweb, in the crook of a branch. The female does more than the male to raise the young.

PARROTS

The Green Parrot (Tota in Hindi) is one of the commonest birds in India. These colourful birds with their incessant shrill chat-

ter are seen in flocks wherever food is available. They eat both seed and fruit, especially figs and guavas. Parrots are wasteful feeders, discarding virtually the entire fruit after a few bites. Males have a blushing pink and black collar round their necks while the female is uniformly green.

Parrots feature in many Indian legends and stories. They make wonderful pets and become attached to their owners. They even learn to mimic human speech.

PEACOCK

Called Mayuram in Sanskrit and Mor in Hindi. The male of the species has a crest of plumes and a magnificent tail with brightly coloured spots. It is found throughout the country and is also the National Bird and a protected species. Indian songs and folklore celebrate the peacock's grandeur when it displays its tail before rain or storm.

At one time the peacock was a common sight in almost all parts of India but today, it is found mostly in dry, scrub and semi-arid land. It is also common around villages, particularly where there are rivers and streams.

A peacock has four or five hens. A shy and alert bird, it feeds on grain, vegetable shoots, insects, rats, lizards, snakes and other small prey and is valued by farmers for keeping the snake population in check. The mating display of the peacock is a spectacular sight as it dances with its outspread tail, bowing and scraping before the female. The nest is a shallow scrape in the ground, lined with sticks and leaves.

The peacock figures as a motif on some late Harappan grave pottery where it is seen with a recumbent figure within its stomach. In Hindu mythology, it is the mount of Kartikeya, the god of war (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranic Gods). This may be the reason why peacock feathers, if kept in the house are thought to be unlucky. Kama the god of love is also occasionally seen riding with his wife Rati (desire) on the back of a peacock rather than on his usual parrot.

The peacock is a favoured motif in art and inspired Shah Jehan's famous Peacock throne. It was an element of the courtly ethos depicted in Mughal miniature paintings and in Raagmala paintings (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

PURPLE SUNBIRD

A tiny, brilliant metallic blue bird with a curved, pointed beak, the purple sunbird (Shakarkhora in Hindi) is a common sight in most gardens. The male assumes this colour during the breeding season but is otherwise a nondescript brown or olive brown like the female. Its tiny wings beat at an incredible rate and help it to hover like a helicopter over a flower, from which it sucks nectar.

Sunbirds build exquisite pendant nests of soft grass, rubbish and cobwebs, covered with bark and secured with caterpillar droppings. A projection above the nest conceals the entrance. The female builds the nest alone and incubates the eggs but the male pitches in when it is time to rear the young. The call of the sunbird is



Snakebird drying its wings

quite out of proportion to its size, a high-pitched, lilting melody.

SHAMA

A pretty black bird with chestnut underparts and a long tail, it could be called the cousin of the Bulbul and is found in forest-clad foothills and in shady ravines. It is shy and retiring and avoids human settlements. Its melodious, rich, thrushlike song makes it a prized cagebird. It nests in tree hollows or in the tangled base of a bamboo clump. The Shama's song features in Indian literature.

SHIKRA

The Shikra is a lightly built hawk, ashy blue – grey on top with a white and rusty-brown underside. There are three species of Shikra, found throughout the country up to a height of 1,500 m. It avoids dense forests and prefers open, lightly wooded country.

A swift hunter, it swoops down on its prey even before the victim realises the danger. It builds an untidy nest of twigs much like a crow's, high up in trees, a favourite nesting place being the mango tree. Both parents raise the young but only the female incubates.

SNAKE BIRD/DARTER

Elegant 'snake-necked' water bird, a solitary fish eater found in ponds and jheels (marshes) across India. Can be spotted in shallow water, absolutely still for long periods of time, waiting to dart its long neck out to catch fish, or spreading out its wings to dry in the sun.

TAILORBIRD

A small olive green bird with whitish underparts and a perky tail that keeps bobbing up and down, it frequents gardens, scrub jungle and even verandahs where plants are kept. It has a happy, loud call.

Called Darzi or Phutki in Hindi, it makes a nest of pliant leaves, sewn together in a cup with soft fibres, cotton-wool and vegetable down. Both sexes share parental duties but only the female incubates.

VULTURE

Giddh in Hind. A large bird with a naked head and dark plumage, it is found in the tropical and temperate parts of the country.

A carrion eater, it plays an important part in maintaining the ecological balance. It does not steer by a sense of smell but has extremely acute eyesight. When one bird spies a carcass and swoops down, other birds follow. The vulture population has greatly diminished in recent years because of the high content of pesticide in the bodies of dead animals.

MOUNTAINS/LANDFORMS

ARAVALLIS

One of the oldest mountain chains in the world, it is a great watershed separating the Indus and Ganga river systems. Some geologists also believe that this mountain range has contained the spread of the Thar desert.

The Aravallis stretch for about 700 km from Delhi in the north-east through Rajasthan to the northern part of Gujarat in the west. The average height of the range is about 400 to 600 m. The 1722 m Guru Shikhar in the Abu Hills is the highest peak. The Aravalli area has rich deposits of quartz.

HIMALAYAS

The Himalayas are young fold mountains which were created about 40 million years ago when India presumably drifted away from Antarctica and rammed into the underbelly of Asia at the breakneck speed of 4 inches a year. This is why marine fossils are found in the Himalayas.

The Himalayas run in a south easterly curve along the northern border of India, separating it from Nepal and Tibet. The mountains can be divided into three parallel ranges of about 2,500 km in length and 225 to 300 km in breadth – The Greater Himalayas, (Himachal) the Lesser Himalayas, (Himadri) and the Shivaliks.

The snowcapped peaks are the source of a number of rivers – Sone, Kosi, Brahmaputra, Sutlej and Ganga to name a few. Flora ranges from the deciduous forests of the Shivaliks to the conifers, mosses and lichens of the higher regions which provide a home for a number of animals, from the mongoose to the leopard.

The Himalayas are believed to be the abode of the gods and the mythical Mt. Meru, whose summit is 84,000 leagues above the sea is the site of Brahma's heaven in the centre of the world.

RANN OF KUTCH

The extensive salt flats in the Kathiawar peninsula are called the Ranns of Kutch. The larger northern portion, which is 18,000 km, is the Big Rann and the smaller south eastern portion, 5000 km, is the Little Rann. They are separated by a narrow channel.

The Rann of Kutch, believed to be a raised portion of the sea bed, was a navigable lake in Alexander's time (c. 325 BC). It has subsequently risen further and is now a desolate, uninhabitable wasteland. During the monsoon it is completely submerged by sea water driven in from the gulf of Kutch and rainfed streams.



Frozen Bhrigu lake

The Rann comes to life as the water level decreases. It is the only known breeding ground for flamingoes in India, which build distinctive raised mud nests.

The endangered Wild Ass is found in the Little Rann.

THAR DESERT

The Thar or Great Indian Desert is about 650 km long and covers 2,00,000 sq. km, two-thirds of which lie in Rajasthan, west of the Aravalli Range. The arid Marusthali (deadland), or the desert proper and the Baqar (semidesert fringe) average annual rainfall of 100 to 500 mm which is very unevenly distributed. The eastern part is drained by rainfed streams which originate in the Aravallis and by the Luni (salty) river.

The construction of the Rajasthan Canal started in 1958 and when complete is expected to green 11% of western Rajasthan with water drawn from the Sutlej river.

The Thar desert is the home of some endangered species like the Asiatic Lion of the Gir forest, the Wild Ass of the Rann of Kutch, Black Buck and the Great Indian Bustard.

VINDHYAS

Low lying range of mountains in central India, they form a broken chain which separates the Gangetic plain from the Deccan Plateau and runs from Gujarat to the south edge of the Malwa Plateau. The average elevation of its features varies from 100 to 1,500 m above sea level. The Vindhya ranges have a light covering of deciduous forests and are bound on the south by the river Narmada.



Devaprayag, confluence of two rivers

RIVERS & LAKES

CHILKA LAKE

The largest brackish water lake in the country, Chilka lies on the eastern seaboard of Orissa. Fossil evidence shows that this lake was once a part of the sea. The area of the lake varies from 560 to 800 sq km depending on the season. It is divided into two parts: the sandy-bottomed outer channel which opens into the sea and the main lake which has a muddy bottom, rich in organic matter.

Nalaban, which means 'weed covered marsh' in Oriya, is one of the biggest islands on the lake. With an area of 10 sq km, it is submerged for four or five months during the monsoon but in winter it is a breeding and feeding ground for more than 100 species of waterfowl.

A variety of plankton-micro-organisms, fish and turtles are found here. Dolphins were quite common once but are now rarely seen. The local population lives mainly by fishing.

GANGA

Ganga, the holy river of the Hindus, has its source at Gangotri in the Himalayas from where it flows east for a distance of 2,400 km to fall into the Bay of Bengal.

The river Ganga had its mythical origin during the incarnation of Vishnu as Vamana. When he measured the world in three steps, the nails on his left foot caused a pore on the upper side of the universe from where Ganga fell down into heaven. She was brought to earth by king Bhagiratha's austerities and Shiva broke her fall on his head so that the force of her descent would not destroy the earth. When Ganga tried wilfully to sweep Shiva away he imprisoned her in his matted hair (jata) until further penance by Bhagiratha made him relent. The descent of Ganga is one of the outstanding sculptures at Mahabalipuram (See Archaeology/Architecture).

In the move to Aryanise the Ganga basin, when the Vedic people shifted focus from the Indus to the Ganga, a myth evolved that Ganga would take on all the sins of the world. Thereafter, people have religiously bathed in her waters to cleanse themselves of sin. It is also believed that if the bones of the dead are thrown into the Ganga, the departed spirits are absolved of all their earthly sins. Gangajal (water of the Ganga) is widely used in religious ceremonies and is sold in bottles. Today the river is greatly polluted in the plains, though its silt-rich banks make its basin fertile (See Holy Places: Panchaprayag).

GODAVARI

The 1,450 km long Godavari originates in the north Sahyadris near Nasik. Fed by tributaries like the Purna, Majra, Penganga and Indravati, it traverses a huge gorge, some 60 km long and 200 m wide, which it cuts in the Papikonda range of the Eastern Ghats, en route to the Bay of Bengal. The Godavari delta appears to merge southwards into the delta of the Krishna. Two districts in Andhra Pradesh are named for this river: East and West Godavari.

The 56 span long, railway bridge at Rajahmundry is the second largest in India. Past Dhavaleshvaram, the river divides into two. The eastern branch which meets the sea at Yenam is called the Gautami Godavari and the western, the Varistha Godavari, meets the sea at Narsapur. Logs of teak were once floated down the river. Its rich delta attracted French, Dutch and English traders.

The Godavari is rich in legend. It is believed that Rama and Sita stayed at Panchavati on its banks. It was here that Lakshmana cut off Surpanakha's nose.

The word Godavari signifies the giver of cows, a euphemism for prosperity. The river is also known as Gautami as it was supposedly brought to earth by the sage Gautama.

KAVERI

Rising on the Brahmagiri hill at Talakaveri at an altitude of over 1,310 m in the Western Ghats, the Kaveri flows over 760 km through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu before entering the Bay of Bengal. The upper course of the river is in the hills of Coorg from where it descends rapidly, losing nearly 500 m in altitude within 10 km. The gradient gets gentler and the stream matures as it enters the Mysore Plateau in which the topography lends itself to the storage of water by anicuts for canal irrigation. Some of these anicuts were built over a 1000 years ago. Srirangapatnam (See History: Chronology – Tipu Sultan) and Sivasamudram are two holy islands on its course. The Krishnasagar Dam provides hydro-electric power and conserves water.

At Sivasamudram, the river descends over a precipice forming the spectacular falls of Gagana Chukti (Heavy Spray).

A myth has it that Agastya Muni (See Mountains/Landforms: Vindhya) prayed to Shiva for water to found a holy place. At the same time Kaveri also prayed to Shiva, who then filled Agastya's bowl with Kaveri water. When Agastya reached south India, he meditated with the bowl in front of him. At the request of Indra, Ganesha in the guise of a crow sat on the edge of the bowl and upset it. The water flowed out as the river Kaveri.

KRISHNA

The second longest east flowing river of the south after the Godavari, the 1,290 km long Krishna has its source in the Western Ghats near Mahabaleshwar at an altitude of about 1,400 m. A springfed river, it has ten main tributaries of which the Bhima and Tungabhadra, are rivers on their own.

The Krishna comes down the ghats at Raichur, where it descends 120 m in a distance of just 5 km. It then flows east to Vijayawada after which its delta begins. In 1855, the first dam on the river was built outside Vijayawada where the river flows between two mountains a kilometre apart.

The banks of the river have many pilgrim centres like Srisailem (See Holy Places: Temples – Jyotirlingas) in Andhra Pradesh, where on Mahashivaratri, pilgrims take water from the river to bathe the temple idols. Buddhism too flourished by the river and many ruins and relics dot the banks at Amaravati and Dharanikota (See Archaeology/Architecture).

MAHANADI

The Mahanadi (Great River) has its source 40 km southeast of Raipur in the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh where it is only a

small stream till it is joined by the Seonath. Many other tributaries join it between Chota Nagpur and Sambalpur.

The estuary and basin are basically wild and untapped because of its unnavigable waters, rich in natural resources.

The Mahanadi is prone to seasonal fluctuations. During the monsoons it discharges more than 1,17,000 cu m of water at the Naraj Gorge but at the height of summer it is only 40 cu m.

The main channel of the river enters the Bay of Bengal at False Point where the harbour, surrounded by forests was constructed over 150 years ago.

NARMADA

Unlike most south Indian rivers, the Narmada flows west into the Arabian sea after running a course of 1,300 km. It rises near the hill shrine of Amarkantak at 1,000 m in the Maikal range. At Jabalpur it takes a right-angled turn over the Dhuandhar falls (Fall of Mist) before cutting a gorge through the famous Marble Rocks. Flowing between the Vindhya and the Satpura ranges, the river has historically formed the boundary between Hindustan and the Deccan.

The river is not of much use for irrigation and water transport in the Deccan because the river floor is sunk between high banks of rocks and the water level is lower than that of the adjoining countryside. Its holiness pre-dates the Ganga's.

Tribal traditions venerate the Narmada, whose sacred qualities as the central river of India are celebrated in the religious belief that while the Ganga sanctifies Prayag, Kashi, Haridwar and Rishikesh, the Narmada purifies anything she touches. An ancient pilgrim route involves traversing both banks of the river.

RAVI

The Ravi is one of the five rivers that give Punjab its name – land of the five waters. It rises in the Pir Panjal range in Himachal Pradesh and flows into the Chenab river. Its journey in the mountains is short, most of its 710 km being in the plains where it forms part of the international boundary between India and Pakistan.

Although the river is snowfed and perennial, it is prone to high seasonal fluctuations of volume as it passes through areas of very low rainfall. This, and the high temperatures lead to evaporation. Its long journey through flat land makes it an ideal river for irrigation.

The Ravi, called Iravati in Sanskrit, is celebrated in epic and Puranic literature as one of the Sapta Sindhu, the seven rivers of the Indus system where Vedic culture originally flourished.

SAMBHAR LAKE

One of the largest inland saline depressions in India, the Sambhar Lake is a virtual hollow in the sands of Rajasthan. It is 35 km long and 3 to 11 km broad and covers about 233 sq km. The lake is fed by two flood rivers – the Bandi and Mendha but dries out completely in summer.

The area surrounding the lake is completely barren, with the Aravalli hills acting as a barrier in the south and northeast. The only inhabited place is the nearby town of Sambhar.

TUNGABHADRA

Part of the Krishna river system, the Tungabhadra is made up of three big and three small rivers. The two major rivers of this group are the Tunga and the Bhadra which have their sources very near each other on Gangamula peak of in the Western Ghats at an altitude of 1,200 m. The Tunga flows northeast past Sringeri, (sacred to the Shankaracharya), through bamboo groves and coffee plantations before joining the Bhadra at Kudli, from where it is called the Tungabhadra. The rivers Sharavati, Kumudavati and Vairada join the Tungabhadra in Karnataka while the Vetavati and Handri join it in Andhra Pradesh.

An important city on the banks of the Krishna, Tungabhadra was Vijayanagara in Karnataka's Bellary district (See History). At the height of its power in the 14th and 15th centuries, many stone dams were built, ten of which are still in use.

The Tungabhadra flows as a separate river for 645 km through Raichur and the Rayalaseema district of Andhra Pradesh. Its waters are sweet, which has led to the saying 'Ganga snanam, Tunga panam' which means 'Bathe in the Ganga but drink of the Tunga.'

YAMUNA

The principal tributary of the Ganga in north India, it has its source at Yamunotri glacier on the northwest slope of Badarpanth peak (6,387 m). The Yamuna runs almost parallel to the Ganga for 130 kms before meeting it at Allahabad. The Giri and Tons rivers are major rivers that join it in the hills and the Sind, Chambal, Betwa and Ken in the plains. The total drainage area of the river and its tributaries is over 30,000 sq km. The Ganga-Yamuna doab has rich alluvial soil, excellent for agriculture.

The Yamuna is also known as Kalindi and worshipped as a black goddess, riding a tortoise, carrying a water pot in her hand. Like the Ganga, the Yamuna is said to have purifying powers.

FORESTS & PARKS

EVERGREEN FORESTS

The accepted norm for ecological health is that a country should have about one third of its total geographical area under forest. With a mere 18%, India falls drastically short of this requirement.

Because India is such a large country, it has almost all kinds of forests. Moist tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen are found mainly in the rainy tracts of the Sahyadris and the hill regions of the Shillong plateau. The few surviving wet evergreens of the southern Sahyadris, with their high rainfall closely resemble equatorial forests.

These forests provide abundant leaf manure and ensure an even flow of water. A vast variety of trees is found in these forests – mahogany, jamun, bamboo and palm. The semi-evergreen type of forest is found in the less rainy parts of these regions and provides certain important timber species.

Tropical moist deciduous forests are typical monsoon forests with teak as a dominant species. This is the largest forest type, found all over the country where rainfall is moderate (100 to 200 cm). Sal, teak, bamboo, sandalwood, sheesham and catechu tree (See Herbs and Natural Remedies – Khair) are some of the important trees found in peninsular India.

HIMALAYAN FORESTS

The Himalayan ranges have a variety of forest types ranging from the tropical to the alpine. At the foothills are belts of moist deciduous forests. To the east, in the elevation range of 1000 – 2000 m in parts of West Bengal, Bihar and UP is a belt of wet temperate forests. Evergreen oaks and chestnuts predominate here and there is a thick layer of humus at the base of the trees. Sal occurs at lower levels.

Moist temperate forests on the southern slopes of the Himalayas (2000 -3000 m) have broad-leafed evergreen oaks, laurels and chestnuts. At upper levels spiny conifers like pine, cedar, silver fir, spruce, deodar, chinar and walnut cover large areas. Higher still there is a transition to alpine forests with fir, juniper, pine and birch. These provide a fairly dense forest cover between 3000 – 4000 m but get progressively stunted and sparse at higher altitudes.

The southern montane forests occur in the Western Ghats, Nilgiris and Satpuras.

KEOLADEO GHANA NATIONAL PARK

A small 29 sq km sanctuary, less than 200 m above sea level, it is one of the richest waterfowl reserves in the country. Because of its proximity to Bharatpur, it is often referred to as the Bharatpur Sanctuary. Shrubs and medium-sized trees like ber, babul, khejri and jamun are nesting ground for egrets, spoonbills, darters, herons and cormorants. During the monsoon more than 300 species of migratory birds come to this reserve, the largest number being ducks. One can estimate their number by the fact that in 1938, the Viceroy's party shot 4,273 ducks in a day! This is also the only winter stopover for the rare, endangered Siberian Crane.

SUNDERBANS

One of the least encroached-upon tidal swamps in estuarine West Bengal and Bangladesh, the 2,500 sq km large Sunderbans are a paradise for the tiger that has now got accustomed to living in the salty water of the 320 sq km of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve.

This area has a rich variety of lifeforms including mud skippers, climbing perch, a large range of mollusc and crustacea, Wild Boar, Chital and Swamp Deer. An odd feature about this area is that high tide occurs twice a day. The core area of the forest is a reserve.

The adjoining Patkhalika Sanctuary has a large nesting colony of water birds, including the Openbilled Stork, the Little Cormorant and Large Egret.

JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

Covering 521 sq km in the two hill districts of Pauri Garhwal and Nainital, in UP Corbett Park has a large artificial lake formed by the damming of the Ramganga river that cuts across the Park. There are more than 400 species of birds in the Park. Tiger, elephant, several kinds of deer, civet and leopard cat, monitor lizard and python are among the animals commonly found here.

VELAVADAR & TALCHAPPAR

These National Parks were specially set up to protect the beautiful Blackbuck in Rajasthan and Gujarat. A wide variety of creatures that live in desert and semi-arid regions are also found here.

PIROTAN ISLANDS

India's only marine Park, Pirotan comprises a group of coral islands off the coast of Gujarat. Octopus, giant clam, sponge, crab, lobster, anemone, over 200 varieties of fish and 18 species of shark are found here.

TREES/PLANTS

ASHOKA

In Sanskrit, its name means 'that which gives no grief.'

It is sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists who planted whole groves of it for prayer and meditation. Sita in the *Ramayana* was imprisoned by her abductor Ravana in an Ashoka grove.

A medium sized evergreen tree, with an erect trunk, its bark is used for making Ayurvedic medicines.

BABOOL

This thorny evergreen has hard, heavy enduring wood, and the tree itself is put to good use in the plains of rural north India: the young plant fences village homes, the saplings provide posts and poles for hutments, the timber, which is resistant to white ants, is used for rafters and door frames.

Babool bark is used in making astringents. The branches are used for paper pulp and the gum is used in calico printing and dyeing.

BANANA

Kela in Hindi, which means shaking, is descriptive of the tree said to have originated in east India on the banks of the Ganga. It travelled to Persia, Syria, Arabia and Egypt. Buddhist sculptures show banana leaves and the scriptures mention a drink made of the fruit called Mochapana.

All parts of the tree are used. Most of them are edible, the large leaves are eaten off, the stem is used as a vegetable as is the flower and raw banana. The fruit of course is a staple.

BANYAN

Called Bargad in Hindi (See Herbs and Natural Remedies), it belongs to the ficus family. Its spreading roots, hanging from branches cover vast tracts of ground. The Banyan tree is the usual meeting place for villagers who gather under its shade to discuss important matters.

The Banyan symbolises the three gods of the Hindu Triad – Vishnu is the bark, Brahma, the roots, and Shiva, the branches. According to Hindu tradition, the Banyan tree is visited by goddess Lakshmi on Sunday.

It reaches enormous proportions, 70 to 100 ft in height, sending down roots from the branches, which enter the ground and form trunks. It has broad, oval leaves, and figlike fruit, eaten by birds and monkeys.

BLACK PLUM

Called Jambu in Sanskrit and Jamun in Hindi, it gives the subcontinent its ancient name, Jambudvipa, isle of the Jamun tree (Sri Lankans still refer to India as Dambadiva). Called the Indian Blackberry, the Jamun tree is a large evergreen with small, pale green flowers. The fruit is small, juicy and pink, turning black as it ripens. The leaves are fed to tassar silk worms. The seeds are used in medicines for diabetes and also fed to cattle.

The Jamun tree is considered sacred to Krishna and Ganesha. Buddhists also hold the tree in veneration.

The leaves of the tree are strung together to make 'toranas' (garlands to adorn the entrances to homes).

COCONUT PALM

Called Narikela in Sanskrit and Nariyal in Hindi.

The most auspicious of all fruit, the coconut is a prerequisite for every religious and festive occasion. The tree is found throughout coastal India.

No part of it is wasted. The wood is carved into ornaments, walking sticks and furniture. Coconut fibre is used for stuffing upholstery and mattresses and is made into ropes and coir matting. The juice of the green coconut is a popular summer drink on the coasts, drunk off the shell and white coconut flesh, desiccated or fresh is a popular ingredient in Indian cuisine.

Avvaiyar, the wandering poet of the Tamil Sangam (See Literature), whose poems are still taught 1800 years after her time, picks the coconut tree as the best example of gratitude.

CORAL JASMINE

Called Harshringar in Hindi and Parijata in Sanskrit, this tree is regarded as a heavenly wish giver. It is planted extensively in India since ancient times for its shade. The bark is used for tanning leather and the rough leaves for polishing wood in place of leather.

Krishna's wives Rukmini and Satyabhama both coveted this tree, brought to earth by Krishna from Indra's garden. Krishna's solution was to plant it in such a way that the trunk stood in Satyabhama's garden and the branches hung over into Rukmini's and it was she who collected the flowers each morning.

Another story tells of a princess called Parijata who fell in love with Surya the Sun, and eloped with him, but was later abandoned. Parijata died of grief and from her funeral pyre rose a single tree on which bloomed white flowers with



Semul, Silk Cotton in bloom

orange stems. Since the flowers cannot bear the sight of the sun, they bloom after sunset and as soon as the first rays of the sun touch them in the morning, they drop to the ground (See Herbs and Natural Remedies; Performing Arts: Dance – Kuchipudi).

EBONY

Dirghapatra in Sanskrit and Tendu in Hindi, this medium sized deciduous plant has greyish bark and ovate leaves. The branches are woody and coarse. Flowers are of all colours and range from white to purple and each flower lasts only a day. Though the flowers are beautiful, they have no scent. The flowers are used in the preparation of cough syrup.

A Gond tribal legend from Orissa goes that when the earth was sinking during the great flood, a Gond couple sheltered in a gourd, with a bundle of twigs to build a fire when they came out. They pulled the

gourd shut and slept for many days. When they emerged they found a new world outside. They made a little fire and put it out before they went exploring. In their absence, a burnt twig took root and grew into an ebony tree – black in colour because it grew from a charred piece of wood.

FLAME OF THE FOREST

Called Dhak in Hindi and Palas in Bengali, the flamboyant orange flowers of this medium sized deciduous tree seem to set the forest ablaze. Mentioned in the *Vedas*, its trefoliate leaves represent the Hindu Triad; Brahma on the left, Vishnu in the middle, and Shiva on the right. The wood resembles teak and is used in building, the leaves are fodder for animals and the bark and the seeds are used in treating snakebite.

GUL MOHUR

In Hindi, Gul means rose and mohur is the old name for a coin or seal. Christians call it

the Holy Ghost Tree, because its peak flowering occurs about the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, by the middle of February or beginning of March.

A middle-sized widespread, shade-giving tree (in winter) with beautiful vermilion flowers, the Gul Mohur came from the island of Madagascar, off the coast of Africa. Tremendously popular in India, it has died out in its original home.

HIBISCUS

Japa or Javakusum in Sanskrit, this popular plant is commonly called Shoenflower. A big shrub or a small tree, the flowers come in a variety of colours from white to violet each with its characteristic long stamen. The flower is used in preparing medicinal hair oil and the bud is rubbed into the eyes for sores.

INDIAN CORK

Akash Neem in Hindi. A straight elegant tree with smooth, oval leaves. The flowers are fragrant white masses, growing at the end of branches. The wood is used for small, light furniture.

JUJUBE

Also called Chinese Date or Fig. Ber in Hindi.

A large tree with numerous aerial roots. The wood is hard and durable and used for tent poles, furniture and yokes. Paper pulp too is prepared from the wood.

A grove of ber trees at the foot of the Himalayas was chosen as a hermitage by two saints Nara and Narayana which became the great pilgrim centre Badrinath (See Holy Places: Temples).

It was ber berries that old Shabari lovingly fed Rama in the forest, biting them first to make sure they were sweet. While Rama and Lakshmana were searching for Sita (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana) a small ber tree called out to them that while it could not save Sita from Ravana's clutches, in its struggle to do so it had managed to tear her clothes and a scrap still clung to its branches. Rama blessed the gallant ber tree with immortality. Even when the tree is axed down, a single root will revive it.

KACHNAR

This ornamental deciduous tree is cultivated mainly for its beauty, in parks and gardens. It is in bloom with flowers of many colours – white and mauve and pink. The bark is used for tanning and dyeing and the seeds yield oil. The pods are eaten as a vegetable. Most parts of the tree have medicinal properties. The tree is often seen in sculptures as a sacred symbol.

KADAMBA

Considered a very auspicious tree, the Kadamba is associated with the dalliance of Krishna and Radha, and its sweet scented clusters of small yellow flowers are celebrated in poetry, painting and myth.

The Kadamba has horizontal branches with leathery leaves up to 30 cm long. It grows in the sub-Himalayan tracts of Bengal and in the Western Ghats. Its wood is used for packaging and light furniture.

The Kadamba was the only tree found on an island in the Kaliyadaha lake before Krishna destroyed the evil snake Kalia. Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu is said to have perched on the tree and immortalised it with a drop of nectar that fell from its beak. Sanskrit literature lauds the rain-bearing breeze as Kadambenila, scented by the Kadamba.

On the eleventh day of the bright fortnight in the month of Bhadra (See Cosmos: Calendar), the Kadam tree is planted with great ceremony in Orissa and Bengal and worshipped for wealth and children.

LOTUS

Called Kamala, Padma, Saroja, Abja, Neeraja and Pundarika this round-leaved, flowering water plant has been venerated in Hindu and Buddhist traditions since ancient days as a throne for the gods and for the moral it exemplifies by blooming so beautifully in muddy waters. The flowers are white or pink or violet. The oldest myth goes that when the deluge swept away the earth, Vishnu lay on the water, and a lotus flower emerged from his navel. Vishnu is thus often described as Padmanabha and many deities are praised as 'lotus eyed,' Pundarikaksha, Kamalanayana, Sarojadalanetri and Neerajakshi.

The consort of Vishnu, Sri or Lakshmi is depicted standing on a deep pink lotus while Brahma's consort, Saraswati the goddess of learning and music, is always shown seated on a white lotus (shweta padmasana).

The lotus stem is eaten as a delicacy.

MANGO

India's most prized fruit, the mango has been cultivated here for more than 4,000 years. Hindus believe that Shiva married Parvati under a mango tree, so mango leaves are hung on marriage pandals (pavilions) and strung across the lintels of homes as an auspicious emblem. Raw or ripe, dried, pickled, or cooked into chewy slabs called aampapad, chutneys and a range of dishes, the vitamin-rich mango with its many local varieties (each with fierce adherents), is unrivalled in India.

MARIGOLD

Sthulapushpa in Sanskrit and Gendva in Hindi, this 2 ft high annual has bright orange flowers used exclusively for garlands and to cure diseases of the eye.

NEEM

A most important tree in India, it is found in almost all parts of the country. The wood has an aroma and a natural resistance to white ants. It is used for furniture and carts. The fibre is used in ropes; the seed yields an oil used in soap making. The twigs are commonly used to clean teeth. Its medicinal properties are extensive. The leaves are naturally antiseptic and are used in bath water as a disinfectant after an attack of chicken pox or measles (See Herbs and Natural Remedies).

POMEGRANATE

Dalima in Sanskrit and Anar in Hindi. A small tree, it has pale green filigree leaves. The deep red fruit has a thick, hard skin and a great number of seeds. Once the fruit ripens, it splits.

The Prophet Mohammed is said to have advised his people to eat the fruit to purge 'envy' from their minds. The Parsis use the twigs of the tree to make a sacred broom and when a Parsi child is invested with the sacred thread (navjot), the seeds of the pomegranate are thrown over him to ward off evil spirits. Every part of the tree has a medicinal use (See Herbs and Natural Remedies: Anar). In the *Varaha Purana*, the planter of trees is promised salvation: "He never goes to hell who plants an Aswattha (Pipal), or a Banyan or ten Jasmines or two Pomegranates or a Panchaama, five Mangoes."

POPPY

Called Aphenam in Sanskrit, Khushkus or Aphim in Hindi. The Poppy plant grows annually. Its flowers are large and come in many hues like white, pink, red and violet. Poppy seeds have a pleasant taste and are often used in curries and in confectionery. From the half-ripened fruit comes opium used in medicine and as a narcotic.

RED SILK COTTON

Semul in Hindi. This tall tree produces the ideal wood for matchboxes and sticks. The flowers are large and fleshy and stand out strikingly against the bare branches. The soft, silky cotton from the seeds are used for stuffing pillows. It is believed that Bhishma Pitamaha (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata) rested under the Semul after his labours. Its flowers are sacred to Shiva and the tree in full bloom personifies the goddess of fortune Lakshmi, standing with her arms outstretched, holding lamps.

SAL

Sal in Hindi. This large tree with pale yellow flowers provides useful timber. The wood is durable and has a natural resistance to white ants. The stem exudes a gum, used in the manufacturing of shoe polish, varnish and carbon paper.

The sal is sacred to tribals who regard it as an abode of spirits. They build their shrines under its shade.

It is believed that at the time of the Buddha's birth, his mother Queen Mahamaya seized the branch of this tree. The Buddha died in a sal grove.

SCREWPINE

Called Ketaki in Sanskrit, Thazhai in the south, this small tree is often grown as a soil binder along the canals of Kerala. The flowers, in long white or light yellow spathes have a unique fragrance. In Tamil Nadu, girls plait this flower into their hair and its fragrance helps overcome the odour of fish along the coast. But the flower is never used in worship.

The story goes that Vishnu and Brahma argued about who was greater. Shiva then appeared as a vast pillar of fire. Vishnu and Brahma sought to find the extent of this marvellous pillar: Vishnu burrowed into the earth as a boar, while Brahma flew up as a swan. Vishnu returned frustrated but Brahma decided to cheat. He caught a Ketaki flower falling from the sky and produced it saying he had got it from Shiva's head. Vishnu disbelievingly asked the flower if this were indeed so, and Ketaki lied that it was so.

On hearing this Shiva banned her from worship for evermore.

SHAMI

A medium-sized evergreen tree, with a thin crown, the branches are covered with conical prickles. The flowers are fine-petalled, small and yellow. A valuable fodder tree.

The *Vedas* endowed the Shami with 'fire' properties. A Rig Vedic legend says that Pururavas, ancestor of the Pandavas (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata) generated fire by rubbing two branches of the Shami and Ashwattha together. The tree is also revered because Rama is said to have worshipped it before he set out with his army to rescue Sita.

TEAK

Shaka in Sanskrit and Sagaun in Hindi. Its Latin name *Tectona grandis* comes from the Malayalam Tekka which crept into the Portuguese language as Teca. *Grandis* means large. The Teak is a tall deciduous tree and its wood is most valuable as it has a natural resistance to insects and white ants;

it is the most coveted material for building ships, carriages and furniture. The tree also produces a tar oil used as varnish.

TEMPLE TREES

Champa in Hindi. A deciduous tree found throughout the country. The wood is light and soft and ideal for making drums and other musical instruments. The sap, the bark and the seeds have medicinal value. The flowers come in shades of pale yellow or deep pink and are very fragrant.

Since the tree blooms even after it has been uprooted Buddhists and Muslims plant it next to tombs as a symbol of immortality.

The Buddha's image is often carved out of its wood and its blooms are offered to Hindu deities. Hindus forbid cutting it, as they hold it sacred to Kamadeva, the God of Love.

The best known legend on the Champa is the tale of two queens. Each time the younger queen gave birth to a child, the jealous older one sent the king out on a hunt, killed and buried the child inside the palace wall and substituted a monkey in the cradle. This happened with seven baby boys and one baby girl. Finally the king, much as he loved his younger queen, had no choice but to drive her out of the palace and into a small hut. Meanwhile outside the palace grew seven trees with fragrant flowers and beside them, a smaller tree. People called them Champa and the single one Parul. It soon became evident that the younger queen alone could enjoy the flowers, which scattered at her feet each time she came out of her hut. The truth soon dawned on the king, with the trees screaming 'murderer' when they saw the older queen who was forced to confess and was subsequently banished from the kingdom.

TULIP

Ghanda Bhanda in Sanskrit and Bhendi in Hindi. The leaves of this medium-sized evergreen are smooth, broad and heart-shaped. The pale yellow, maroon-centred flowers grow both singly and in pairs, darkening when they fall. They are shaped like the okra or lady finger, hence their Hindi name Bhendi.

WOOD APPLE

Bael, Bilva in Hindi. The entire tree is of use: wood for building and for instruments; yellow die from unripe fruit, for printing; oil extract from nutritious fruit. The whole tree is sacred to Shiva, particularly the trifoliate leaves, used in archana (floral offering). In fact one of Shiva's many names is Bilvachandya – he who has a staff of Bilva wood.

HERBS & NATURAL REMEDIES

Hundreds of herbs, fruit, vegetables, minerals and other natural substances were effective in our ancient systems of medicine in the prevention, arrest and cure of almost all conditions and diseases. Even today many simple household remedies are based on commonly grown herbs and ingredients. Ayurveda and Unani are the most popular Indian systems of medicine. In this section, Indian terms are given with Latin and English equivalents where available (See Food: Cuisine). Though broad medicinal properties are indicated, it is not recommended that these remedies be tried without a specialist's advice.

AAM

Mango (*Mangifera indica*). A delicious seasonal fruit, eaten raw and ripe, pickled, cooked, made into jams and juices. The ripe fruit is said to increase the amount of blood in the body. The raw mango (keri) is cooked over hot coal and the pith mixed with water and sugar for a concoction called 'panah', drunk as an antidote for heatstroke and exhaustion. The powdered kernel of the mango stone is advised for diarrhoea and excessive bleeding.

ADHATODA

Aroosa (*Adhatoda vasika*). This is a common plant found in the subcontinent, resembling mango leaves. It is prescribed for diseases of the lungs to expel phlegm and as a germicidal and antiseptic.

ADRAK

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*). A common culinary ingredient, known to aid digestion, increase appetite and reduce flatulence. A hot brew (kashayam) of ginger, tulsi (basil) spiked with fresh lime juice and laced with honey is excellent for cold and cough.

AJWAIN

Oregano (*Ptychotis ajowan*). Used for stomach disorders and ailments of the liver and intestines. It relieves colic and is added to foods that may give rise to flatulence.

AKASHBEL

Amarbel. A leafless parasitic plant which grows on shrubs and trees. It is used to contain paralysis and eliminate worms in the

intestines. Also used for fomentation of liver and other inflammatory conditions.

AKH

Swallow wort (*Calotropis gigantea*). A common wild plant, its sap is used for chronic ringworm. The leaves are warmed with sesame oil and wrapped over swollen joints for relief, especially from rheumatism.

AKOL

Alangium (*Alangium lamarcki*). A large tree with fruit like the rose apple. It has no taste of its own and is used as an antidote for opium and to cure infantile tuberculosis.

ALSI

Linseed (*Linum usi tatissimum*). Both the seed and its oil extract are used to cure asthma, cough and inflammatory conditions. As an ointment, effective on burns.

AMALTAS

Cassia (*Cassia fistula*). A tree with large leaves similar to those of the rose apple. The pith is used as a purgative, the flowers as a laxative and as a remedy for diphtheria and cough.

AMLA

(*Emblic myrobalan*). A light green, sour fruit, it is the cheapest source of Vitamin C. It does not get destroyed in cooking and is considered to have many curative properties for ailments ranging from mental illness to premature ageing (See Bahera, Harad; Adornment: Cosmetics).

ANAR

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*). The juice of this legendary fruit quenches the dehydrating thirst in diarrhoea. The sour, unripe fruit is used to make digestive powders. The flowers of the Anar are prescribed in threatened miscarriages and the rind is used as an astringent. The bark of the root cures intestinal worms (See Trees/Plants – Pomegranate).

ANJIR

Fig (*Ficus carica*). Considered a nutritious and 'blood forming' fruit. Also acts as a laxative and is prescribed for spleen inflammation.

ARAND

Castor plant (*Ricinus communis*). Yields castor oil which is mainly used as a purgative; it is also an antidote for poisons like those caused by snakebite or excessive opium.

ARHAR

Split gram (*Cajanus indicus*), a commonly used lentil, it is believed to relieve inflammations of the internal organs. An applica-



Amaltas

tion of arhar paste is said to cure alopecia (bald patches on the head).

ARJUN

White murdah or kahu (*Terminalia arjuna*). A large tree which grows up to 30 m. The fruit resemble the Chinese gooseberry. The bark is of help in heart diseases and bone fractures.

ASGANDH

Winter cherry (*Withania somnifera*). The leaves relieve inflammation; the root, dried and powdered, is used to treat rheumatism and lumbago.

BABCHI

(*Psoralea corylifolia*). Popularly used as a laxative. The seeds help cure leucoderma.

BABOOL

Kikar (*Acacia arabica*). A large, thorny tree, the twigs of which are commonly used to clean teeth. The leaves are believed to relieve diarrhoea. The charcoal obtained by burning the wood is used as a dentifrice for gums. Also used for cough, asthma and phthisis.

BADA

Bargad, banyan (*Ficus bengalensis*). A large ficus (fig) tree that puts down roots from its branches. The sap of the leaves helps heal cracked feet in winter and the fibre from its branches is ground in water and is used to arrest vomiting.

BEL

Wood apple (*Aegle marmalos*). The pulp is used for diseases of the intestines and liver. Mixed with water and drunk, it helps relieve heat exhaustion. The paste of the leaves is applied to cure sore eyes.

BAHERA

Beleric myrobalan, one of the three myrobalans. The fruit, used in stomach disorders generally in conjunction with the other two myrobalans. Also helps in cough and asthma. The fine powder is used to treat epiphora or watering of the eyes (See Amla, Harad).

BAINGAN

Brinjal, eggplant (*Solanum melongena*). A common vegetable. Relieves swelling especially in whitlow (swelling of the thumb). The paste also helps in excessive sweating of the palms and soles.

BAKAIN

Indian lilac (*Melia azedarach*). A tree similar to the neem. The leaves are used to purify blood and are prescribed for scabies, ringworm, leprosy and leucoderma.

BANJH KAKORA

A monsoon creeper, called banjh (sterile), for it produces no fruits. The root is an antidote for snake bite – administered as an emetic to expel the poison.

BATHUA

Pig weed (*Chenopodium album*). A common leafy vegetable, easily digested and used to cure fever and liver disorders. Commonly eaten with curd.

BHANG

Indian hemp (*Cannabis sativa*). A narcotic plant from which a strong intoxicant is made. While a judicious intake increases appetite and cures insomnia, prolonged use is most addictive and harmful.

BINAULA

Cotton seed (*Gossypium indicum*). Mainly used to feed cattle, it enhances the yield of milk. Also prescribed for general debility, asthma and as an antidote for opium and dhatura (a weed) poisoning.

BINDAL

(*Luffechinata*). A creeper fruit called bindal doda which grows wild in rain forests. It is an effective purgative and emetic. Also suggested for epilepsy, jaundice and piles. Taken internally it induces abortion.

BOOKKAN BOOTI

Logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*). Used in venereal diseases and for relief from a burning sensation in the palms and soles.

BRAHMI BOOTI

(*Herpestis monniera*). A small spreading herb, resembling a horse's hoof, growing along river banks, used to treat memory lapses and other neurological disorders.

BRAHMADANDI

(*Lamprachaenium microcephalum*). A small herb that grows under bushes in the monsoon. Used as a general tonic to purify blood and as a tonic for the brain.

CHANA

Bengal gram (*Cicer arietinum*). A commonly used, highly nutritious cereal. Soaked overnight and eaten with honey in the morning, it acts as a tonic. The shell of the grain is an effective diuretic.

CHHUIMUI

Lajjalu or lajwanti (*Mimosa pudica*). The plant is similar to the Touch-me-not or Jewel Weed: the leaves close at the slightest human touch. It helps treat piles. The juice of the leaves relieves delirium in high fever.

CHIRCHATA

Rough Chaff Tree (*Achyrantha aspera*). A plant with thin knotty branches, an excellent antidote for snake and scorpion bite.

CHOONA

Slaked lime (*Calcii hydras*). Eaten with paan (betel leaves), it is an excellent source of calcium. It neutralises hyperacidity and used with turmeric it helps reduce inflammation.

DHATURA SEEDS

Thorn apple (*Dhatura alba*). The seeds are recommended for chronic colds, asthma, impotence. Though a poisonous herb, it acts as an antidote to poison.

DEEKAMALI

Cambi resin (*Gardenia gummiifera*). A gum, 'chatmat' obtained from this tree is an antiseptic. The decoction of the gum fights guinea worms and other intestinal parasites.

DHAK

Palash (*Butea frondosa*). Its flowers (tesu), leaves, shoots, gum and bark are all used to treat sexual disorders.

DHANIA

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*). A seed commonly used in Indian cooking, its paste, applied on the forehead relieves headache. Taken with curdled milk it stems diarrhoea. The leaf is used as a garnish (See Food: Cuisine).

DOODHI

Lauki (*Euphorbia thymifolia*). A popular gourd, it helps contain dysentery. Its dried fibre is used as a loofah (bath scrubber).

FARASH

Tamarish (*Tamarix dioica*). A large tree with fruit the size of Bengal gram, which are effective in reducing the swelling of the spleen and in checking haemorrhoids.

GAJAR

Carrot (*Daucus carota*). The versatile and popular tuber, eaten raw or cooked or made into a sweet called Gajar ka Halwa (See Food: Cuisine). It contains sugar, starch, iron, calcium, Vitamins A, B, C and phosphorus. It is also a diuretic.

GAOZABAN

(*Onosma bractestum*). Both the flowers and leaves of the plant are used to treat cold, cough, asthma and congestion of the chest. The Arq gaozaban (essence of the plant) is a Unani heart medicine.

GAUMA BOOTI

(*Leucas cephalotes*). Despite the offensive smell the plants, leaves and flowers help fight chronic fevers and intestinal parasites. Also makes an antidote for snake bite.

GENDA

Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*). Its yellow flowers are generally used in garlands. An anti-inflammatory, it is also a good diuretic, an antidote for wasp stings and an effective cure for eczema, earache and toothache. A paste of marigold flowers is used to reduce inflammations.

GHEEKUVAR

Common Indian aloe (*Aloe vera*). The pith and leaves are used to cure chronic cough, asthma and lumbago.

GILOY

(*Tinospora cardifolia*). A creeper with large, extremely bitter, betel-like leaves which are used for chronic fevers, disorders of the liver and stomach and as a blood purifier.

GUL BANAFSHA

Violet (*Viola odorata*). Though these flowers grow only in Kashmir, the dried flowers are available everywhere. These are used to cure fevers, pleurisy, cough and pneumonia. The flowers are made into a paste and applied to the forehead to relieve headache.

GULE ABBAS

'Four o'clock flower' (*Mirabilis galapa*). A garden plant, its leaves can reduce inflammation. The root heals carbuncles and taken internally, the leaves cure scabies, jaundice and venereal disease.

GURMAR BOOTI

(*Gymnema sylvestre*). Its Hindi name, gurmar, means 'a killer of sweet taste.' Its bitter

leaves are used to treat diabetes. Also used as an antidote for snake bite.

HALDI

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*). An essential ingredient in almost all Indian cooking (See Food: Cuisine). Besides adding colour it acts as an antiseptic for cuts and wounds. Makes a good poultice for boils and if the powder is boiled in water, cooled and poured over the eyes, it relieves pain and redness. Drunk with warm milk and honey, it relieves congestion and sore throat.

HARAD

Chebolic myrobalan (*Terminalia chebuli*). This fruit, along with the other two myrobalans, Bahera and Amla, forms the Triphala – a known, tested remedy for a number of ailments in ancient Indian medicine. Taken regularly it is said to prevent premature greying and tone up the intestines.

HARSHRINGAR

Parijata, Shefalika, night jasmine (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*). The buds are used for dyeing fabrics the seeds and flowers are prescribed for piles.

HING

Asafoetida (*Feaulla asafoetida*). This resinous gum is an essential ingredient in Indian cuisine because it helps ward off flatulence. It is also an antidote to opium.

HIRANKHORI

(*Chorchorus fascicularis*). Also called Karvibel (bitter creeper), it is an excellent blood purifier and used to heal boils and abscesses.

HULHUL

Caravalla (*Gynandropsis pentaphylla*). A monsoon herb, it helps relieve migraine and treats intestinal worms and piles.

IMLI

Tamarind, from the Persian Tamar-ul-hind, 'the date of India' (*Tamarindus indica*). The sour pods of this gigantic tree are used a great deal in cooking, specially in south India (See Food: Cuisine). Its alkaline properties neutralize hyperacidity, bilious fevers, nausea and thirst. Commonly used to shine brass and copper.

INDRAYAN

Colocynth (*Citrullus colocynthis*). The pulp and fruit of this creeper are used as cathartic medicine. Also helps rheumatism and premature greying.

ISABGOL

Spogel or fleaseed (*Plantago ispagula*). Husk that expands when soaked in water, a



The beneficial Neem

household cure for chronic constipation and dysentery.

JAL DHANIYA

Lit. water coriander. It grows on river banks and is said to have properties that can contain the bubonic plague. Also prescribed for sciatica.

JAMUN

Jambalum (*Eugenia jambolana*). A deep purple fruit used to treat diabetes. The decoction derived from the bark is prescribed for swollen and bleeding gums.

JEERA

Cumin seeds (*Cuminum cuminum*). Commonly used in Indian cooking, the medicinal taste of the seeds dispels a feeling of nausea.

JHAU

Mayaphal (*Tamarix gallica*). A plant with leaves resembling those of a fir tree, found on river banks. Its leaves and wood normalise a swollen spleen.

KALA BICHHUA

Devil's claw. Mainly used to treat leucoderma. The oil from the seeds is used to massage patients suffering from paralysis, rheumatism and lumbago.

KALONJI

Small fennel (*Nigella sativa*). It is a carminative which also destroys intestinal parasites. Ground in vinegar, it helps in the treatment of leucoderma, ringworm and acne.

KANDOORI

(*Coccinia indica*). The leaves of this creeper reduce blood sugar.

KANER

Oleander (*Nerium odorum*). The bark cures skin disorders and purifies the blood.

KANGHI BOOTI

(*Abutilon indicum*). The name of this plant comes from its yellow comblike flowers (kanghi). A cure for piles and venereal disease.

KAPAS

Cotton plant (*Gossypium arboreum*). The flowers act as tonic for the heart and are even said to cure madness. The leaves are an antidote for dhatura poison.

KARANJUA

Fever nut (*Caesalpinia bonducella*). A wild plant with bitter fruit, which treats malaria. The kernel purifies blood and kills intestinal parasites.

KARER

Caper berry (*Capparis decidua*). The unripe fruit is pickled and eaten to cure an enlarged spleen. Kills intestinal parasites. The powder of its burnt wood is made into a cough linctus with honey.

KARVI TORI

Bitter luffa (*Luffa amara*). A very good emetic and purgative.

KASAUNDI

Talwarphali (*Cassia occidentalis*). Its swordlike seed pods give it the name talwar (sword) phali. An antidote for snake poison. Also used in oedema and enlargement of the liver.

KATTHA/KHAIR

Catechu (*Acacia catechu*). An essential ingredient in paan (betel leaves). A consti-

pative agent, effective in dysentery. Also cures thrush.

KHUS KHUS

Poppy seeds (*Papaver somniferum*). Cures a number of ailments. Ground with bhang (*Cannabis*) and applied to the palms and soles, it relieves insomnia. Gripping pain, afterbirth pain, colic and mental imbalances are other conditions where this soporific is prescribed.

KHAKSI

London 'rocket' (*Sisymbrium trio*). Grows in fields with fenugreek. Its seeds are used to treat chronic fevers, especially those associated with chickenpox and smallpox.

KURA

Kurchi (*Halarrhena antidysenterica*). As the Latin name suggests, the bark of the tree makes an effective medicine for dysentery.

LAHSAN

Garlic (*Allium sativum*). Popular in Indian cuisine, this pungent bulb has been used for centuries to check flatulence. Also treats diseases of the respiratory tract and skin disorders. Helps reduce cholesterol. Raw garlic eaten morning and evening is said to ward off heart attacks.

LASORA

(*Cordia latifolia*). A fruit consumed as a pickle in parts of the country, it is a laxative and provides relief in respiratory ailments.

MAHUA

Indian Butter Tree (*Bassia larifolia*). Its leaves resemble those of the mango tree. The flowers are said to be nutritive. The paste makes an antidote for snake bite as well as an intoxicating drink.

MAKO

Black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*). A wild monsoon herb, believed to have extraordinary anti-inflammatory properties. Deals effectively with oedema of the liver, intestines and uterus.

MANDUA

Indian millet (*Eleusine coracana*). This millet-like grain checks the ill effects of bites. It is also used to treat dropsy.

MEHNDI

Henna. Has been used for centuries in India by women to colour their palms and feet and by both men and women to dye and condition the hair. It has a cooling effect and reduces a tendency to pimples and boils (See Adornment: Cosmetics).

MULETHI

Liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*). The root of the creeper is used to relieve cough



The sacred Tulsi or Basil

through expectoration. The syrup is bottled and sold under a Unani label. Finely powdered and applied to the eyes, the root removes yellowness.

MUNDI

Gorakmundi (*Sphaeranthus indicus*). The herb with its blue-green flowers makes a tonic for the heart and brain. Also used as a blood purifier.

NAKCHHIKNI

Sneeze wort (*Centipeda orbicularis*). True to its name, this herb induces sneezing with its pungent smell and relieves congestion.

NEEM

Margosa tree (*Melia Azadirachta*). The bitter leaves of the tree have been used as an antiseptic for centuries. All parts of the tree have qualities for purifying blood. Its twigs are used as toothbrushes. Chewing them is said to strengthen gums.

NIGAND BABRI

Tulsi (*Sacred basil*). This variety is used to cure skin ailments like scabies, ringworm and leucoderma.

NIMBU

Lemon (*Citrus bergamia*). Juiced, pickled, used in salad dressings and as both garnish and flavouring. The fruit is an excellent source of Vitamin C. Its medicinal properties take care of spleen, liver and intestinal disorders. Also used a great deal in cosmetic preparations (See Adornment: Cosmetics).

OONT KATARA

Camel's Thistle (*Echinops echinatus*). The thorny plant is a favourite food of camels.

Its flowers relieve night blindness and the bark is used to treat dry cough, fever and dropsy.

PAPAYA

(*Carica papaya*). Known as the golden tree, its fruit act as a good digestive because of the high pepsin content. Arrests internal inflammation and the sap is a specific for intestinal parasites and ringworm.

PIPAL

(*Ficus religiosa*). The bark of this large tree is steeped overnight in water and drunk as a diuretic. The berries are used to cure sexual disorders.

PEEPLÉE

Long pepper (*Piper longum*). The bitter corns cure stomach ailments.

RATANJOT

(*Onosma echinoides*). The herb grows on river banks and is a diuretic with cooling properties. It purifies blood and helps dissolve and pass out kidney stones.

REETHA

Soapnut (*Sapindus trifoliatus*). The rind of the reetha fruit is an antidote for snake poison. Soaked in water, it is used to clean most things, even silver, but it is particularly good for woollens.

SHANKHAHOLI

(*Canscora decussata*). The bell-shaped flowers are a specific for purifying blood and treating diabetes. They are also used as a prophylactic for small pox.

SARPAGANDHA

(*Rauwolfia serpentina*). Also called Chotachand, this spreading grass is a specific

for mental ailments. It came to the notice of allopathic medicine 50 years ago and a most vital alkaloid has been extracted from it and is used extensively in lowering blood pressure.

SANTH

Horse purslane (*Trianthema monogyna*). A herb of the rainy season, used in the cure of chronic cough and asthma.

SENA

Senna (*Cassica lanceolata*). The leaves, resembling henna make a good laxative.

SHAHDEVI

(*Sida rhombifolia*). Grows wild in sugar-cane fields. A good blood purifier.

SHAKARKANDI

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*). A tuber popular as a vegetable, it provides vast amounts of sugar and starch to the body. Sweet potato pudding is said to be an aphrodisiac.

SEMUL

The silky-soft cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*). Cotton from the pods is used to stuff pillows and the bark deals effectively with abscesses (See Trees/Plants).

SIRIS

(*Albizia odoratissima*). A large tree that is planted along roadways for shade. Its bark is powdered and used as a mouthwash to relieve a toothache. Snuff made from the seeds relieves colds.

SONTH

Dried ginger (*Zingiber officinale*). A prime ingredient in chutneys and Kashmiri food (See Food: Cuisine). Helps digestion and is considered useful in curing amnesia.

THUHAR

Common Milk Hedge (*Euphorbia neripholia*). The sap is used as a purgative and to treat rheumatism, dropsy and chronic cough. The milk of this plant is prescribed for toothache.

TULASI

Holy basil (*Ocimum sanctum*). This plant, revered by most Hindus (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts), has great medicinal properties. It is a remedy for cough and fever. Taken with pepper, it is a good prophylactic against malaria.

VISHANKRANT

Neelpushpi or blue flowers. It improves digestion and wards off bouts of malaria.

ZIMIKAND

Yam (*Dioscorea bulbifera*). The tuber cooked as a vegetable, relieves cough and asthma.



PEOPLE

Bharatiya

**The 870 million people of India
with their resilience and stubborn belief in
their composite identity
make this country the world's
largest democracy**

GREAT INDIANS

From an honour roll that goes back to BC, it is possible to provide thumbnail sketches of only a few of the remarkable people who have enriched this land in diverse ways, especially during the struggle for Independence.

AGASTYA (c. 3000 BC)

A sage who came with the first crossing of the Aryans into India. He is believed to be the first Aryan to cross the Vindhya ranges and colonise the Deccan. Legend has it that he drank all the water of the ocean signifying his conquest of coastal India and is mentioned as one of the Sapta Rishis (seven great sages) in Sanskrit literature.

AGNIMITRA (2nd century BC)

Son of Pushyamitra, the founder of the Sunga dynasty, Agnimitra reigned in 149-141 BC according to the *Puranas*. A great patron of art and literature, he is the subject of a famous contemporary play Kalidasa's *Malvikagnimitra* (See Literature: Sanskrit).

AMRITA SHERGILL (1913-1956)

One of the pathbreaking artists of modern India, Amrita Shergill's works display both Indian and western traits. She was born in Budapest (Hungary) and came to India and settled in Shimla after completing her education in music and painting in Paris. In 1936, she made a self-portrait which gained her instant fame. Among her better known paintings are *An Ancient Story-teller*, *Three Virgins*, *The Celibate*. She died early leaving behind a rich legacy.

ANNA SAHEB KARVE (1858-1962)

Anna Saheb Karve led an ascetic life. He worked for the upliftment of women, kindling a new awareness through his writings in the reformist journal *Kesari*. He was a staunch advocate of widow remarriage and established an orphanage in Pune. He founded the Bharatiya Mahila Vidyapeeth, the first university for women. He died at the age of 104.

ANNIE BESANT (1847-1933)

Annie Besant, British by birth, adopted India as her home. She was president of the Theosophical Society and president of the Indian National Congress and founder of the Home Rule League in India. She took a leading part in the struggle for Indian Independence and established the Central Hindu College in Benaras. She was the author of *Religious Problems in India*.

ARYABHATTA (5th century BC)

A famous mathematician and astrologer, author of the celebrated *Aryabhatta Tantra* in Sanskrit at the age of 23. He was also a poet and scholar who is famous for *Dasgitikasutra* which contains 33 stanzas on mathematics, 25 on measurements of time and 50 on spherical measurements. He was the first to believe that the earth was round and not flat. Before Copernicus he insisted the earth rotated round the sun. He knew the reasons behind solar and lunar eclipses and was also aware that the moon and other planets get their light from the sun (See Science).

ASVAGHOSA (1st century BC)

A philosopher and priest, who lived in the reign of Kanishka (See History: Dynasties) he was a well known poet, musician, intellectual and dramatist. *Rashtrapala* and *Sariputra Prakarana* are two well-known plays by him. He also wrote a book of poems *Sutra Alankara* and the memorable epic *Buddhacharita*, which narrates the life of Gautama Buddha. He expounded Mahayana Buddhism and his books were translated into Tibetan and Chinese (See Religion: Buddhism).

AUROBINDO GHOSE (1872-1950)

After a revolutionary career in the struggle for Independence, he became a saint and yogi. He edited the publications *Vandematram* and *Karmayogi* and was hounded by the British. He left politics in 1909 and started the Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. He wrote of his beliefs in *The Divine Life*. *Divya Jeevan*, *Savitri*, *Geeta Ki Bhumika*, *Veda Rahasya* and *Future Poetry* are his other well known books. *Savitri* was his last major work (See Literature: Indo-Anglian).

BAL GANGADHAR TILAK (1856-1920)

Bal (or Balwant) Gangadhar Tilak believed that militant methods were necessary to get rid of British rule. He was affectionately called 'Lokmanya' (honoured by the people) Tilak. In 1881 he started journals like *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Maratha* (English) to prompt national awakening. He coined the famous slogan, "Swaraj (independence) is my birthright and I shall have it." For his anti-imperialistic activities, he was jailed several times. During his imprisonment he wrote his famous commentary on the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, the *Gita Rahasya*.

BHAGAT SINGH (1907-1931)

Sardar Bhagat Singh played a vital role in the struggle for India's freedom. Born at Banga near Jalandhar, he was the nephew of a freedom fighter, Sardar Ajit. Sukhdev,

Rajguru and Dutt were Bhagat Singh's fellow martyrs. They hurled a bomb at the hall of the Central Assembly and after a mock trial were sentenced to death and hanged on March 23, 1931. Bhagat Singh was honoured with the title *Shahid* (martyr).

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR (1893-1956).

A leader of the Indian underprivileged classes, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was educated by the Maharaja of Baroda and studied in America and England. He started as a typist in a government office and went on to become a founding father of the Indian Constitution. He was the first Union Minister of Law, Government of India, 1947-51 and the president of the Scheduled Castes Federation. He embraced Buddhism as a rejection of oppressive Hindu orthodoxy. He presented the reformist Hindu Code Bill which was passed by Parliament. Dr. Ambedkar has authored several books on economics, sociology and politics.

BIRBAL (16th century)

One of the 'nine gems' or band of distinguished people in the court of Akbar the Mughal, he was a poet and a trusted general, known for his wit and humour. His real name was Mahesh Das. Akbar gave him the titles of 'Raja' (king) and 'Kaviraj' (the great poet). He was killed in action while trying to subdue the Pathan tribes in the North-west Frontier.

CHANAKYA (4th century)

A celebrated Brahmin who plotted and achieved the destruction of the degenerate Nandas of Pataliputra and the enthronement of Chandragupta Maurya. Also called Kautilya or Vishnugupta he wrote the political treatise *Arthashastra*, often compared to Machiavelli's *The Prince*. He is the protagonist of Vishvakadatta's play, *Mudraraksasha*. Chanakya's guile and foresight are a byword even today in Indian folklore and literature.

CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD (1905-1931)

A nationalist who sacrificed his life for India's freedom, he had no faith in non-violence. While Bhagat Singh was active in Punjab, Azad was busy in UP spreading nationalist propaganda. He led the Hindustan Republican Army and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. With a group of people he looted the government treasury for funding the freedom movement. He was finally surrounded in Alfred Park, Lucknow, by a police squadron. Azad faced them courageously for hours. Even after he fell, the British officers dared not approach him, until it was confirmed that he was really dead.

CHARVAKA

The great iconoclast intellectual of ancient India who negated the *Vedas* and brushed aside concepts like rebirth and moksha or liberation (See Philosophy) and claimed that truth was what was experienced with the senses. According to him 'pleasure' was the ultimate aim for which one struggled in life. He also blasted moral strictures like *pativrata* or fidelity of women, saying it was the creation of weak-minded men. Charvaka's school of philosophy came to be known as 'Lokayata' (See Philosophy). According to Jaina sources, he hailed from Avanti Desha and died at Pushkara Tirtha.

CHHOTU RAM (1883 - not certain)

Sir Chhotu Ram dedicated himself to public life in Punjab and dominated state politics in the pre-partition days. He served as assistant secretary to the Raja of Kalakar (Oudh). In 1908 he joined the St. John's Mission High School, Agra. He practised law at Agra for a year and shifted to Rohtak in October 1912. For over a period of ten years (1926-36) he acted as the leader of the Unionist Party in the Punjab Legislative Council. He was elected the president of the Council in 1936 and was the state minister for development and revenue.

C.F. ANDREWS (1871-1940).

An English priest who took up the cause of Indian Independence, he dedicated himself to Mahatma Gandhi and his creed of non-violence. He came to India as a missionary and professor in St. Stephen's College, Delhi, but stayed on to join the struggle for freedom.

C.R. DAS (1870-1925)

Chittaranjan Das was a great nationalist leader who earned the honorific 'Deshbandhu.' He joined hands with Motilal Nehru and Lajpat Rai to form the Swarajya Party. Das first showed his brilliance as a lawyer in defending Aurobindo Ghose. He fathered nationalism in Bengal and Subhash Chandra Bose looked upon him as his guru. When Das was appointed the mayor of Calcutta, Bose became the chief executive officer.

C.V. RAJAGOPALACHARI (1879-1972)

Philosopher and nationalist leader he was the only Indian to become governor general of India. Mountbatten was viceroy then. He founded the Swatantra Party in 1959 which merged with the Janata Party in 1977. Author of popular English versions of the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

C.V. RAMAN (1888-1970)

Dr. Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman is one of the most distinguished scientists of this

century. He passed his matriculation when he was only 12 and a post-graduate degree in physics from Presidency College, Madras, breaking all previous records. His discovery on light is known as the 'Raman Effect.' For this, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. The British Government in India conferred a knighthood on him. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of London. The Government of independent India honoured him with the Bharat Ratna (Jewel of India order) in 1954.

DADABHOY NAOROJI (1825-1917)

The 'grand old man of India' was looked upon as a father figure by the nationalists, being a founder-member of the Indian National Congress. Nominated to the British Parliament in 1896 and 1906, he was a 'moderate' who believed the goal of Indian independence could be best achieved by gradually winning over the British.

D. H. CHAPEKAR (1869-1899).

Damodar Hari Chapekar with his brothers Balkishan Chapekar (1873-1899) and Vasudev Chapekar (1879-1899) killed two British officers in 1897 in protest against British rule. This was the first individual action or terrorist act against the British in India. All three were executed by hanging at Yervada Central Jail.

DHYAN CHAND (1905-1979)

Sportsman, who joined the army at the age of 16 and started playing hockey while in service. He was included in the Indian hockey team for the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. India won the gold medal and out of a total 28 goals scored by the Indian team, 11 were scored by Dhyan Chand. He was also the captain of the gold medal winning hockey team in the historic 1936 Berlin Olympics. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan. Dhyan Chand scored 101 goals in the Olympics and 300 goals in other international matches. His record stands unbroken.

E.V. RAMASWAMI NAICKER (1879-1972)

The charismatic leader of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) movement in Tamil Nadu who believed in 'direct' action to overthrow British Rule. He was nicknamed 'Periyar' which means 'the elder.'

FERDUNJI NAOROJI (1817-1885)

Leader of 'Young Bombay Party' which established several political, religious and social organisations to promote liberal thought.

FEROZ SHAH MEHTA (1845-1915)

Born in a Parsi family in Bombay, he

studied law in England and returned in 1868 to join the freedom struggle. He was eminent amongst those formed the Indian National Congress. He started propagating his views on higher education through *The Bombay Chronicle*, started in 1913.

GANGA RAM (1851-1927)

Sir Ganga Ram was one of India's pioneer engineers. Despite his humble beginnings he was a great philanthropist. The Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi is named after him.

GHANSHYAM DAS BIRLA (1894-1983)

One of the pioneer industrialists of India, he was the president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in 1924, a delegate to the International Labour Organisation at Geneva in 1927 and a member of the Indian Fiscal Commission on Labour in 1939. Celebrated for his philanthropy and contribution to Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for freedom, he founded several educational institutions, the best-known of which is the Institute of Technology and Science in his village Pilani in Rajasthan.

G. K. GOKHALE (1866-1915)

He has the unique distinction of being the political guru of two diametrically opposed leaders: Gandhi and Jinnah. Gopal Krishna Gokhale belonged to a poor family and had to struggle hard for a living. His moderate views and calm, good sense exerted a powerful influence on Indian politics. In 1899 he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1905 he founded the reformist Servants of India Society. He was a member of the Imperial Legislative Council till his death.

GOVIND BALLABH PANT (1887-1961)

Born at Almora in UP and educated at Allahabad, he qualified as a lawyer in 1909, and joined the freedom struggle, inspired by the non-violent philosophy of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He worked mainly in UP and was associated with the Nehru family. Pandit Pant came to be known as an able administrator. After Independence he became chief minister of UP and later the Union home minister. He was honoured with the Bharat Ratna in 1957.

HOMI JEHANGIR BHABA (1909-1966)

World-renowned physicist who was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and president of the Indian Science Congress in 1951. He published papers on cosmic rays and the Quantum Theory, presided over the Atoms for Peace Conference at Geneva in August 1955 and supervised the building of several atomic reactors in India. He died in an air crash over the Alps.

IFTIKAR ALI KHAN (1910-1952)

Nawab of Pataudi, father of cricketer Mansur Ali Khan was the only sportsman to play Test cricket for both England and India. He was in Douglas Jardine's 'Bodyline' team that toured Australia in 1932-33. He objected to Jardine's bodyline tactics, was dropped from the team and never played for England again. In 1946 he captained the Indian side against England and was even a member of India's winning hockey team in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics.

JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE (1858-1937)

Scientist who amazed the world with his discoveries. A professor of physics at Presidency College, Calcutta, Bose's chief work was on plants and metals. He proved that all the three kingdoms of matter, animal, vegetable and mineral are one. His best-known books are *Response in the Living and the Non-living*, *Plant Responses* and *Motor Mechanism of Plants*.

JAMSHEDJI TATA (1839-1904)

A founding father of Indian industry, he started a cloth mill in Nagpur more than a hundred years ago. Realising that an industrial revolution could be brought about only with the creation of basic industries, he planned and built an entire 'steel city', now known as Jamshedpur. He established the Indian School of Science at Bangalore and the hydro-electric project at Bombay. The Taj Hotel in Bombay, the first of the premier chain of hotels was also built by Tata.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889-1964)

As an architect of modern India and champion of world peace, Jawaharlal Nehru has a permanent place in contemporary history. He was educated in England where he qualified as a barrister in 1912 and returned to India. In 1916 he came into contact with his political teacher, Mahatma Gandhi. He was elected president of Indian National Congress five times and it was under him that the Congress adopted the famous resolution of 'Complete Independence' at its Lahore session in 1929. When India gained freedom in 1947, Nehru became prime minister. He laid a strong foundation for the economic and industrial progress of the country and pursued a policy of non-alignment in the international sphere, which became a valid option for countries which shunned the power blocs of the time. A man of letters, some of his books are *Glimpses of World History* and *Discovery of India*. Nehru loved children and his birthday 14th November is celebrated as 'Children's Day' each year.

J.B. KRIPALANI (1888-1982)

A nationalist who came to the forefront of the Indian National Congress by his sheer ability and political acumen. He participated in every phase of the Independence struggle. He was jailed for the first time in 1920. His association with Gujarat University (1922-1927) fetched him the title 'Acharya' (preceptor). In 1951, he formed the Kisan Majdoor Dal, a popular rural labour union. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha for many years. The secretary of the Indian National Congress and later its president in 1946. He authored several books, and was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi.

J. KRISHNAMURTI (1895-1986)

Jiddu Krishnamurti was a profound thinker of modern times. He gave a new meaning to spiritualism and brought it to the level of the common people. At 11, he was initiated into the teachings of Theosophical Society (See Annie Besant). In 1929, he dissociated himself from the Society and toured through Europe, America, Australia and other countries preaching his philosophy.

J. G. PHULE (1827-1890)

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was a great social reformer who fought for the rights of non-Brahmins, for widow remarriage, and education for women.

K. D. CHATTOPADHYAY (1903-1989)

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was the general secretary of the All India Women's Conference 1926-30 and its president 1944-45. She was actively associated with the national academy for dance, drama and music (Sangeet Natak Akademi) and was responsible for reviving dying handicrafts with her writing, campaigning and official involvement.

K. VEERESALINGAM (1848-1919)

Social reformer, founder of the renaissance in the Telugu language, a liberal and a champion of the rights of women, particularly of education and of widow remarriage.

K. N. ANNADURAI (1909-1969)

Leader of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, author, playwright and social reformer, venerated in Tamil Nadu as 'Anna' (elder brother).

K. M. MUNSHI (1887-1971)

Lawyer, statesman, author, one of the framers of the Constitution, home minister of Bombay in 1937, food minister, governor of UP. Founded the literary-cultural institution, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan soon after Independence. As a prolific modern writer in Gujarati, he has a great many novels,

dramas and memoirs to his credit, as well as essays and histories in English.

KAPIL DEV (b 1959)

One of India's finest all-rounders in cricket. Surprisingly he did not play the game until he was 13. He started playing First Class cricket in 1975 and played in a Test match for the first time in 1978 during the Indian tour of Pakistan. When he was just 20, he set a new record by scoring 1,000 runs and taking 100 wickets within a period of just one year and 109 days. The main credit of India's victory in the World Cup, held in England in 1983 goes to Kapil Dev. His autobiography is titled *By God's Decree*. His latest world record is 400 wickets in Tests and he now ranks second only to New Zealand's Sir Richard Hadlee.

KHUDI RAM BOSE (1889-1908)

A revolutionary who popularised the gospel of *Vande Mataram* or worship of the motherland. In 1906, at an exhibition organised by the British, he distributed anti-government pamphlets. He tried to hurl a bomb at a British magistrate, but was apprehended and sentenced to death. He smilingly accepted the noose.

LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI (1904-1966)

Born into a poor family, his quiet talent and determination brought him to the forefront in the freedom movement and then to politics in UP. He was the minister for railways in the Nehru cabinet and after the death of Pandit Nehru in 1964, he became prime minister of India. He coined the immortal slogan *Jai Jawan Jai Kisan* (Hail soldier, hail farmer). He died in 1966 at Tashkent of a heart attack. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

LALA LAJPAT RAI (1865-1928)

'Punjab Kesari' Lala Lajpat Rai did not believe in non-violent means for throwing off the British yoke. He joined the freedom struggle at a very early age and visited England several times to confer with the British about better terms for Indians. He founded the 'Indian Home Rule League' and started a monthly paper *Young India*. He wrote a popular book, *Self Determination for India*. He led the black flag demonstration against the Simon Commission and suffered blows in return (See History: Chronology).

MADAN LAL DHINGRA (1887-1909)

Remembered as one of those fearless young revolutionaries who jumped into the freedom struggle without a thought for his life, he was born into a well-to-do Punjabi family. His commitment to the Freedom movement led him to shoot dead two British officers. He died in the same jail

where Sardar Udham Singh was hanged. During his trial, he admitted he had taken this extreme step for his motherland and added, "In the service of my country I have nothing but my blood to give."

M. M. MALAVIYA (1861-1946)

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is known for his contribution to social, ethical, and educational upliftment. He is called 'Mahamana' (greatly respected). His untiring efforts in the field of education led to the establishment of Benaras Hindu University. He died in 1946, a year before India became independent.

MASTI V. IYENGAR (1891-1986)

Venkatesa Iyengar was a prolific revolutionary novelist of the Kannada language. He was awarded the Jnanpith Award in 1983 for his work *Chikkavir Rajendra*. He wrote 18 plays, 30 novels, 46 biographies and 17 volumes of short stories. His first collection of stories *Kelpu Sanna Katheyak*, was published in 1920. Masti was selected for the administrative services in 1914 and rose to become chief secretary in 1943.

MAULANA AZAD (1888-1958)

Abul Kalam Azad was a national leader, revered as the embodiment of the spirit of freedom and unity, rising above distinction of caste, creed and communalism. His intense patriotism led to his being imprisoned several times by the British. A premier medical college in Delhi is named after him.

MEGHNAD SAHA (1894-1956)

Born in Saroyatali village in Dhaka (now in Bangladesh), Meghnad Saha came to Calcutta for higher studies where he met scientists like Jagdish Chandra Bose and Dr. Prafulla Chandra Rai who inspired him in his work. Dr. Saha worked with many international scientists in his field of specialisation, astrophysics and invented an instrument to measure the weight and pressure of solar rays. In 1913, Pandit Nehru appointed him director, Indian Science Association. He prepared the original plan for the Damodar Valley Project, the first of its kind in India. Dr. Saha was also a member of Lok Sabha.

MIHIR SEN (b. 1930)

A lawyer by profession, Sen is a barrister of the Calcutta High Court. In 1958, he was the first Asian to swim the English Channel. In 1966, he established five important records and became a world renowned salt-water swimmer. In 1959, he was awarded the Padma Shri and in 1967 the Padma Bhushan, both national awards for excellence.

MILKHA SINGH (b.1935)

'The Flying Sikh' is one of the most outstanding athletes of India. In 1935, he joined the army and paid special attention to athletics. In 1957, he established a new national record of 47.5 seconds in the 400 metres race. In the Asiad held at Jakarta (Indonesia), Milkha Singh won a gold medal in this event. He was awarded the Padma Shri.

MIRZA GHALIB (1797-1869)

His real name was Mirza Asadullah Begh Khan Ghalib and he wrote simple, intense poetry and prose. *Diwan-i-Ghalib*, in 10 volumes is a collection of his poetical works, while *Urdu-i-Hindi* and *Urdu-i-Mullah* are collections of letters (See Literature: Urdu).

M. K. GANDHI (1869-1948)

'Mahatma' (Great Soul) Gandhi is known as 'the father of the nation.' He played a pivotal role in the freedom movement and was the chief architect of Indian Independence. His public career can be divided into two distinct periods. The first is identified with South Africa and the second belongs to India. In South Africa he fought against the racist Asiatic Exclusive Act. He returned to India and began to agitate for Independence. His deadly weapons were passive resistance and non-cooperation. He was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in Birla House, New Delhi on 30th January 1948, five months after India attained Independence. Mahatma Gandhi had also championed a number of other causes like removal of untouchability, the upliftment of backward classes, nationalism and abstention from alcohol. He was a prolific writer and his best known book is his biography *My Experiments with Truth* (See History: British Period).

MORARJI DESAI (b.1896)

Former prime minister of India, he gave up a promising career in the civil service when Mahatma Gandhi gave a call to people to join the national movement for freedom and joined the Indian National Congress. He became general secretary of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee and minister for revenue in the first Congress cabinet. He held key cabinet posts as minister for finance and industry and was India's deputy prime minister. A staunch Gandhian, he is an advocate of naturotherapy.

MOTHER TERESA (b.1910)

Mother Teresa who has been inextricably involved with the fortunes of Calcutta, was born Agnes Gonxha Bajaxhim in Albania and came to India in 1929. Since then, Calcutta has been the centre of her humani-



Mother Teresa

tarian activities. She founded the order of the Little Sisters of the Poor, 'Nirmal Hriday' homes for the sick and the dying and 'Shishu Bhawan' for disabled and mentally retarded children. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and the Bharat Ratna in 1980.

M.S. SWAMINATHAN (b. 1925)

Agro-scientist of international repute whose research in the field of agriculture and efforts in improving the quality of wheat in particular, have won him many laurels. He was the director of the Pusa Institute; director general of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research; secretary, ministry of agriculture and vice-chairman of the Planning Commission. In 1972, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan.

M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI (b.1916)

Carnatic vocalist who has helped popularise Indian classical music all over the world. It was her golden voice that led to her appearance in films, the first one being *Seva Sadan* and her most memorable films were *Meera* and *Savitri* (Tamil). She has sung at some of the most prestigious centres in the world. Among the many awards bestowed on her are the Padma Bhushan in 1954 (the first year of its inception) and the Magasaysay Award in 1974.

NANA SAHEB (1824-uncertain)

Nana Saheb, along with Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, is remembered as the moving spirit of the 1857 revolt. The background for revolt was prepared by him. He was adopted by Peshwa Bajirao as his son in 1827 and trained as a scholar and soldier. He was instrumental in bringing Hindus

and Muslims together to fight under one banner. His end is unknown (See History: British Period; Literature: Indo-Anglian).

NARENDRA DEVA (1889-1956)

Called Acharya, he was an educationist, patriot and politician, he was a scholar of ancient Indian history and political philosophy and was vice chancellor of Lucknow and Benaras Universities. He was a major activist in the freedom struggle and founded the Praja Socialist Party.

PRAKASH PADUKONE (b.1955)

Prakash Padukone is the most successful badminton player of India. At the age of 14, he became the national junior badminton champion and at 15 he was the national champion, a title he retained for nine consecutive years between 1970-78. In the seventh Asian Games, held at Teheran in 1974, he won the bronze medal.

P.T. USHA (b.1964)

Amazing woman athlete, nicknamed the Payyoli Express, was just 12 when she joined a sports school at Cannanore. In the Xth Asiad held at Seoul in 1986, P.T. Usha won four gold medals and one silver medal in the track and field events.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941).

A man of incredible creativity, he was a novelist, playwright, poet, painter, philosopher, educationist, freedom fighter and actor who on 13th November, 1913, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his collection of poems, *Gitanjali*. He founded an international educational institute in Santiniketan in 1901, which later developed into the Vishwabharati University. His well-known poetic works include *The Cycle of the Spring*, *The Evening Songs* and *The Morning Songs*. Some of his well known novels are: *Gora*, *Raja aur Rani*, *Raj Risbi* and *Binodini*. *Kabuliwallah* is one of his most endearing stories. Both India and Bangladesh adopted songs by Tagore as their national anthem.

RAFI AHMED KIDWAI (1896-1954)

Born at Barabanki at Uttar Pradesh, he was the food and agriculture minister in the Nehru government. After his graduation, he joined Gandhi's non-cooperation movement in 1920 and was jailed. While in prison he got to know the Nehrus and became Motilal Nehru's private secretary. In 1936, he was elected president of the UP Congress. In 1942, he was again sent to jail for his active participation in the Quit India Movement.

RAJA BHOJA (997-1052)

Raja Bhoja is the hero of many folktales in Gujarat, a number of them stemming from

the fact that he is said to have defeated Mahmud of Ghazni. Known to be a patron of art and literature, he was himself the author of *Yogamartanda*, explaining yoga in terms of mathematics, astrology and architecture.

RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY (1772-1833)

A revolutionary social reformer who worked with the British East India Company and in 1830 visited England to plead a case on behalf of the Mughal emperor who in turn honoured him with the title of 'Raja.' He stood firmly against all kinds of social bigotry and superstitions and advocated a liberal, international education for his countrymen. He believed in the fundamental unity of all religions. In 1814, he founded the 'Atmiya Samaj' and in 1828, the 'Brahmo Samaj.' His greatest achievement as a social reformer was the abolition of 'sati,' the practice of widow burning (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts). He has been called the 'Father of Indian Renaissance' (See Literature: Indo-Anglian).

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

Union minister for health for 12 years, she had earlier worked as Gandhiji's secretary for 15 years. She was imprisoned in 1942 for participation in the Quit India Movement. She was the first woman president of the 19th session of the International Red Cross held in Delhi in October 1957.

RAJNEESH (1931-1990)

One of the most controversial cult founders of recent times. Born Rajneesh Chandra Mohan in 1959, he became a lecturer in philosophy. He preached a kind of spiritualism and declared himself a 'Bhagwan' (deity). He started an ashram near Pune early in 1970. Rajneesh built an ultra modern town called 'Rajneeshpuram' in Oregon, USA. He expounds his philosophy in several books.

RAM PRASAD BISMIL (1897-1927)

Born in Shahjahanpur, he passed a difficult childhood and devoted his life to the cause of India's freedom. Inspired by the intellectuals and revolutionaries of the socio-religious Arya Samaj, he was convinced that only an armed struggle would achieve Independence. He was involved in the 'Manipuri' and 'Kakori' conspiracies. He planned to rob the state treasury for buying arms and ammunition but was caught and sentenced to death by hanging. He left behind a body of prose and revolutionary verse.

RAMANUJAM SRINIVASA (1887-1920)

Among the noted mathematicians of the world, Ramanujam discovered new

methods of solving mathematical problems. In 1914, he went to UK to study and became the first Indian to be selected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1919. Though he was only 33 when he died, Ramanujam was recognized as a mathematical genius. A commemorative stamp was issued in honour of this wizard.

RANI LAKSHMI BAI (1834-1858)

Her childhood name was Manikarnika or Manu. When she was eight she was married to Raja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi and thus came to be called the Rani of Jhansi. By 1853, she lost both her infant child and husband. She adopted a boy but the British Government did not recognize him as her son and annexed Jhansi in 1853 under the infamous Doctrine of Lapse policy. She led her troops against British forces and died fighting. Her name is immortalized in song, verse and story.

RASH BEHARI BOSE (1886-1945)

Founded the India Independence League in Japan in 1926. Revered as one of India's great revolutionaries, he wanted the British to quit not just India but Asia as well. He prepared and distributed a text called *Liberty* explaining his views. In 1915, Bose left India for Japan and started preparing for 'war' against the British. He edited *New Asia*, a newsletter and authored many books. He also established the 'Indian League'. He died in Japan in 1945, and was honoured by the Japanese.

RAVI SHANKAR (b.1920)

Sitar maestro, disciple of Baba Allaudin Khan of Maihar. He composed music for several Satyajit Ray films (See Visual Arts: Cinema), for the welcome song of the IXth Asiad held at Delhi in 1982 and the signature tune of Doordarshan, the Indian television corporation. In 1976, he was elected a fellow of the Sangeet Natak Academy. The Government of India honoured him by nominating him to the Rajya Sabha in 1986. As an exponent of Indian music and as an incomparable sitarist, Pandit Ravi Shankar enjoys great popularity all over the world.

ROMESH CHANDER DUTT (1848-1909)

He belonged to the family of Toru Dutt, the Anglo-Bengali poetess (See Literature: Indo-Anglian) and served as a civil servant in Bengal. In 1886 he published a complete translation of the *Rig Veda* in Bengali. His well-known books are *The History of Civilization in Ancient India*, *Great Epics in Ancient India* and *England and India*.

RUKMINI DEVI (1904-1985)

The first person to retrieve the dance form

Bharata Natyam from the disrepute into which it had fallen and renew its status as the premier classical dance of the country. She married Dr. G.S. Arundale, president of the Theosophical Society and established Kalakshetra, the school of fine arts at Adyar in Madras. As a Rajya Sabha member, she contributed in no small measure to popularising the concepts of animal welfare and vegetarianism.

SALIM ALI (1896-1987)

An eminent ornithologist associated with the famous Bombay Natural History Society. He received many awards and honours and was nominated to the upper house of Parliament, the Rajya Sabha. Among his many books are *The Book of Indian Birds* and *Handbook of Birds of India and Pakistan*, as well as his autobiography, *The Fall of a Sparrow*.

SAROJINI NAIDU (1879-1949)

Sarojini Naidu holds pride of place among the women freedom fighters of India. She was the first president of the Indian National Congress in 1925, elected at the Kanpur session. After Independence, she became governor of Uttar Pradesh. Known as the Nightingale of India, some of the well-known collections of her poems are *Feather of the Dawn*, *The Song of India*, *The Broken Wing* (See Literature)..

DR. S. S. BHATNAGAR (1894-1955)

Dr Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar, a scientist who played a great part in India's scientific and industrial development, got his doctorate from London University and worked in the Benaras and Punjab Universities, conducting a number of scientific research programmes. He became the director of the Centre Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in 1941. After Independence he headed the ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs. He was also an Urdu and Hindi poet. A prestigious annual award for scientists and a memorial lecture is instituted in his name.

SHRADHANANDA SWAMI (1859-1926)

Born as Munni Ram, he was an atheist but an encounter with Swami Dayananda changed him into an ascetic and a patriot. Once he bared his chest to the gun-wielding soldiers of the viceroy at the Chandni Chowk nationalist procession in Delhi. He founded the Gurukul Kangri with a view to spreading education and edited the journals *Saddharma Pracharak*, *Shraddha*, *Vijay* and *Arjun*; through which he aroused his readers' nationalist feelings. He was president of 1913 Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (literary assembly).

SIR SHRI RAM (1883-1963)

An eminent industrialist who started his career as an assistant secretary in the Delhi Cloth and General Mills on a salary of Rs. 100 a month. By the time he died, he had become a legend. In 1930, he established a sugar mill in Daurala, UP, and the Delhi Cloth Mills.

S. P. MUKHERJI (1901-1953)

A leading light of Hindu Mahasabha. In his early political career, he founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE (1897-1945)

A controversial revolutionary leader. In his youth, while he was in the search of a spiritual master he visited Gandhiji at his ashram in Sabarmati in 1928. However he preferred activism to pacifism. Bose was elected president of the Indian National Congress in 1938. He founded the Indian National Army, which crossed the Indo-Burma Frontier in 1944. Bose and his colleagues left Rangoon on 24th April 1945 for Bangkok. After that, nothing is known. A few days later, Tokyo Radio announced that Bose had died in an air crash.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI (1882-1921)

A revolutionary nationalist poet of Tamil Nadu, he started writing at the age of seven. The king of Ettayapuram was so impressed by his writing that he conferred on him the title 'Bharati' when he was only eleven. In 1905, when Bengal was to be partitioned, Bharati expressed his anguish through his poems. He edited the journals *Bal Bharati* and *India*. He was a political activist and attended the Varanasi session of the Congress. His collection of poems *Swadesha Geetam* was published in 1907. In 1918, he was imprisoned for writing inflammatory verses. In 1920, he edited the journal *Swadesham*. *Kuyil Paatu* and *Panchali-Sabadham* were two well-known poems by him and his compositions are still sung and taught in Tamil Nadu.

SUNIL MANOHAR GAVASKAR (b. 1949)

The 'little master' of cricket started his test career in 1971, during the Indian tour of the West Indies. He has hit 34 centuries and scored more than 10,000 runs, the highest by any batsman. He is the only cricket player in the world who has scored 1,000 runs in a single year thrice. In 1975, he received the Arjuna Award and in 1980, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan. Gavaskar has written *Sunny Days*, *Idols*, *Runs and Runs* and *One Day Wonders*.

S. N. BANNERJEE (1848-1925)

Sir Surendranath was nine years old when the Indian Revolt of 1857 broke out. He

passed the Civil Service Examination in 1869 and was appointed assistant magistrate in Sylhet. Soon he fell into disfavour and was dismissed from the Civil Service. He went to England to plead his case but the verdict went against him. He returned to India and became professor of English in the Metropolitan Institution in June 1875. He was elected to the Bengal Council in 1893. His political career was influenced by English literature.

SWAMI DAYANAND (1824-1883)

Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the founder of the popular reformist Hindu Arya Samaj movement. When he was ten, he left home to become a sanyasi of the Saraswati order. He sought in the *Vedas* a solution to the problems of human misery and final salvation. After 1866, he gathered disciples, maintaining that in the *Vedas*, (especially in the *Rig Veda*) all modern discoveries were enumerated. Arya Samaj eschewed caste and creed differences. Numerous Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) schools in India and abroad came into being. He wrote *Satyartha Prakash*, a book on his doctrine.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (1863-1902)

One of the prominent leaders of the Indian religious and cultural renaissance. His real name was Narendranath Dutta. After the death of his guru, Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa (See Sages and Saints), Swami Vivekananda took up the task of spreading the message of love and spiritualism. He inspired a whole generation of leaders and people in many parts of the world. He delved deep into literature, philosophy and history and had great oratorical powers. In 1893, he went to Chicago as a speaker to the Parliament of World Religions and delivered a historical speech for which he won tremendous acclaim. In 1897, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission for the service of the Indian people.

TANTIYA TOPE (1814-1859)

The credit for the impact made by the 1857 revolt goes largely to Tantiya Tope whose real name was Ram Chander Rao. He was of immense help to Lakshmi Bai and Nana Saheb as the commander-in-chief of the rebel army (See Rani Lakshmi Bai and Nana Saheb). Apart from his outright victories he also confused the British army by his guerilla tactics. The revolt ended with his death.

TENZING NORGAY (1914-1986)

Born in a poor Buddhist family in Nepal, he acquired Indian citizenship in 1933. He was the first Indian to scale the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest as a

member of the British mountaineering team led by Sir Edmund Hillary. He reached the peak on 29th March, 1953. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1959.

TULARAM, RAO (1825-1863).

Led the attack on Meerut in 1857 and headed the troops to crown the last but deposed Mughal, Bahadur Shah II. After the British suppressed the revolt, he fled to Afghanistan and founded the Azad Hind Fauj in Kabul where he remained till his death.

UDHAM SINGH (1899-1940)

Udham Singh's name is synonymous with the infamous Jallianwalla Bagh incident (See History: Chronology). He avenged the massacre by shooting General O'Dyer, the British officer who had ordered the firing on a peaceful gathering. Udham Singh waited 21 years before he could travel to England and carry out his revenge on 13th March 1940. He was arrested and sentenced to death on 30th July, the same year.

VIKRAM SARABHAI (1919-1971)

Looked upon as the first space scientist of India, his main field of research was cosmic rays. He started a physics research laboratory at Ahmedabad. To Sarabhai goes the credit for India's first space satellite *Aryabhata*. He received the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Puraskar (named for the eminent scientist) in 1962 and was awarded the Padma Shri in 1966 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1972, both civilian honours.

V. D. SAVARKAR (1883-1966)

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a patriot, scholar, poet and a writer. His graduate degree was withheld because of his revolutionary activities. At the age of 16, he founded the Abhinav Bharat Organization. When he was being shipped to India from England to face trial, he jumped off the ship and swam into French territory. For his daring acts he came to be called 'Veer' (brave) Savarkar. He wrote many books, including *History of India's Independance*.

ZAKIR HUSSAIN (1897-1969)

Born in Hyderabad, he was a Muslim nationalist leader who adhered to Gandhian principles all his life. He held a number of key positions after Independance: governor of Bihar in 1957, vice-president of India in 1962 and president of India in 1967. He was also the chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University and established the Jamia Milia Islamia University in Delhi. The author of several books on the reformation and development of Indian education, he was a symbol of secularism and in 1963 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna.

KINSHIP

BAISA

Husband's sister.

Synonyms: nanad, bibiji, nanad-bai, nanadal, nanadi, nanadia, nathanar.

BALAM, BALAMVA

Respectful term for husband.

Synonyms: pati, swamy, hariji, kant, kanta, rajan, saina, saiyyan, sajan, sajanva.

BANI, BANNA

Bride, bridegroom.

Synonyms: dulhan, dulha, binani.

BANVARI

Used to address the husband in folk songs.

BHASUR

Husband's elder brother.

Synonyms: jeth, jethan. From the Sanskrit 'jyestha'. His wife, jethani, vahini.

BHAUJI, BHAUJAI, BHAVAJ

Brother's wife.

Synonyms: bhabhi, parjaiji, manni, vahini.

BHAYAHU

Younger brother's wife.

Synonyms: bhabhi, manni

BINDAYAK

Younger brother of bride or bridegroom, ceremonially prepared to accompany the brother or sister.

BUA

Father's sister.

Synonyms: pishi, athai, aathi, atye.

BYAYI

Male members of the bride's and bridegroom's family call each other byayi.

Synonyms: sambandhi, samdhari, sambandhin (female).

CHACHA

Father's younger brother.

Synonyms: kaka, kaku, chittappa, chinnappa.

DADA

Father's father.

Synonyms: thatha, ajoba, thakurda.

DADI

Father's mother.

Synonyms: avva, aaji, thakurma.

DEVAR, DEVARIA

Husband's younger brother.

Devrani—Husband's brother's wife.

Lit: 'Dvitiya var' or second husband. In the villages of the Punjab this is sanctified as a 'chadar' wedding, whereby a younger brother is 'married' to his brother's widow with a sheet (chadar) held over their heads.

DHARAM KA BHAI

Lit. religious brother; adopted brother or 'rakhi' brother, one who has an 'obligatory' relationship, as binding as a sibling's.

DIDI

Elder sister.

Synonyms: apa, akka, tai.

GORI

Wife.

Synonyms: patni, stree, samsaram (Tamil), ardhagini, dharampatni, baiko (Marathi), vadhu, gharwah, garadi (Haryanvi).

GOT, GOTIN

Got, from gotra refers to a man of the same family treated as the husband's elder brother. Gotin—woman of the same family or clan treated as an elder sister-in-law.

GRIHINI

Wife. But in this case also one who runs the house—griha. The ancient scriptures have elaborated that just walls and a roof cannot constitute a home: a grihini turns a house into a home. Without her a griha is nothing but an empty forest.

KANWARJI

Honorific used for husband, son-in-law and other respected persons.

Synonym: maruji.

MAMA

Mother's brother.

MAMI

Mama's wife.

MAUSI

Mother's sister.

Synonyms: khala, peddamma, chinamma.

NANA

Mother's father.

Synonyms: ajoba, thatha, dadu.

NANI

Mother's mother.

Synonyms: paati, aaji, avva, didima.

NOKROM

A Garo term for son-in-law. The husband of the youngest daughter is given the title of 'nokrom.' The Garo society is matrilineal and the family property passes on to the youngest daughter. Under normal circumstances, son of the girl's uncle is brought up as the nokrom.

SAS, SASAR

Mother-in-law, father-in-law.

Synonyms: sasu, sarar, mamiar, mamar.

TAU

Father's elder brother.

Synonyms: jetha, periappa.

PROFESSIONS & COMMUNITIES

ARHATTIYA

In UP a purchaser who purchases goods from a dealer and sells them in the market for a profit. A trader.

BADHWAR

A village watchman (Bengali).

BHUTIYA

An inhabitant of Tibet or Bhutan.

BIHISTI

Water carrier, one who sprinkles roads with water from a goatskin bag to settle the dust.

BUTI-MAR

(Hindi) a tenant who has cleared the land (buti – bush, marna – to destroy, kill).

CUTCHI MEMONS

A community from Kutch, Gujarat.

DUTI

A female messenger who tactfully mediates between a man and a woman to unite them in love, often addressed as 'sakhi' (friend) in songs and literature.

The *Kama Sutra* (See Literature) allots a full chapter on how the duti should go about her job.

The sakhi of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* is one of the best examples of a duti.

GHAUS

(Arabic). The holiest type of fakir (Muslim ascetic). Common tradition had it that so intense was a Ghaus' devotion that his head and limbs fell away when he prayed.

HAKIM

(Arabic) a sage, a physician. A governor, a judge, a Muslim magistrate of yore, commander, ruler, master. Once the title of the governing authority in a province.

HUSAINI BRAHMINS

A community of fakirs of the Beshara order. Its people follow the *Atharva Veda*, but adopt all the doctrines of Islam that are not contrary to it. The men dress like Muslims, the women like Hindus. Their customs are mostly Muslim. They observe the Ramzan fast but wear the tilaka. Their patron saint is Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmer. They practise astrology and palmistry (See Festivals; Religion: Hinduism, Islam – Sufis; Sages and Saints).

JAH

A Muslim title of very high rank such as Mukarram Jah, the present official heir of the former Nizam of Hyderabad.

KAKAR

A surname amongst Punjabi Hindus. Also the name of a Pathan tribe, divided into seven independent clans, engaged in cattle grazing, agriculture and trade.

KAYASTHA

A most progressive and respectable community found mainly in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh of mixed Kshatriya and Vaishya descent. They claim mythical descent from Chitrugupta, a divinity attached to Yama, Lord of Death, who tallies the good and bad deeds of men. Traditionally scribes and accountants, Kayasthas have always laid emphasis on education and are now in several professions.

KHAIKAR

In the Kumaon hills, a cultivator, one who wields the plough.

NAGARAKA

A sophisticated urban citizen (from nagar or city) who enjoys the pleasures of life. The *Kama Sutra* portrays him as a lover of arts who generally leads a hedonistic life.

NAMBOODIRI

High caste Brahmin community of Kerala. Highly conservative, the close-knit community decreed that only the eldest son of a family should marry another Namboodiri. The rest had to perforce marry outside. The Namboodiris are dwindling in numbers.

NARI

Woman.

NOKMA

Village headman of the Garo tribe. Nokmanship is recognised by the government. This is not an elective post. The village land is vested in the hands of one family and the youngest daughter of the family claims ownership. Her husband is normally accepted as the Nokma.

OKKALIGA

Or Vokkaliga. In Kannada a cultivator, farmer, tenant of the soil, an inhabitant.

PANDA

Or tirthaguru, is a Brahmin who resides in one of the holy places and performs rituals for the various pilgrims. He also acts as a local tourist guide, taking the visitors around the temples, ponds and other sacred places and explaining to them their significance for which he is paid a generous fee (dakshina).

PANI

An ancient trading community of India. They were a prosperous people owning cattle, land and ornaments. They lived in fortified houses and were sea traders who sailed the Arabian sea.

The Panis find frequent mention in the *Rig Veda* in the form of a dialogue between Pani and Sarma. They are believed to be enemies of Vedic literature and described as non-believers and anti-yajna. There is a school that believes Panis were the pre-Aryan or first inhabitants of India.

PANIKKER

An instructor in the use of weapons and arms and military exercises, a teacher of gymnastics in Kerala.

RAJPUT

Lit. the son of a king, a name used by the warrior clans of north-west India, who swept into the subcontinent from central Asia after the death of Harsha Vardhana of Thaneswar (670 AD) and, with the help of the priestly class, appropriated descent from the ancient dynasties of the Sun and Moon (the Suryavanshi and Chandravanshi tribes) or from the sacred fire kindled on Mt. Abu by the sage Agastya (Agnikula or clan of fire). From these, 36 primary Rajput clans claim origin.

REDDY

(Telugu). The principal caste of cultivators in Telengana, part of Andhra Pradesh; a chief farmer or cultivator. The headman of a village in that area is a Pedda Reddi or senior Reddy.

SADHU

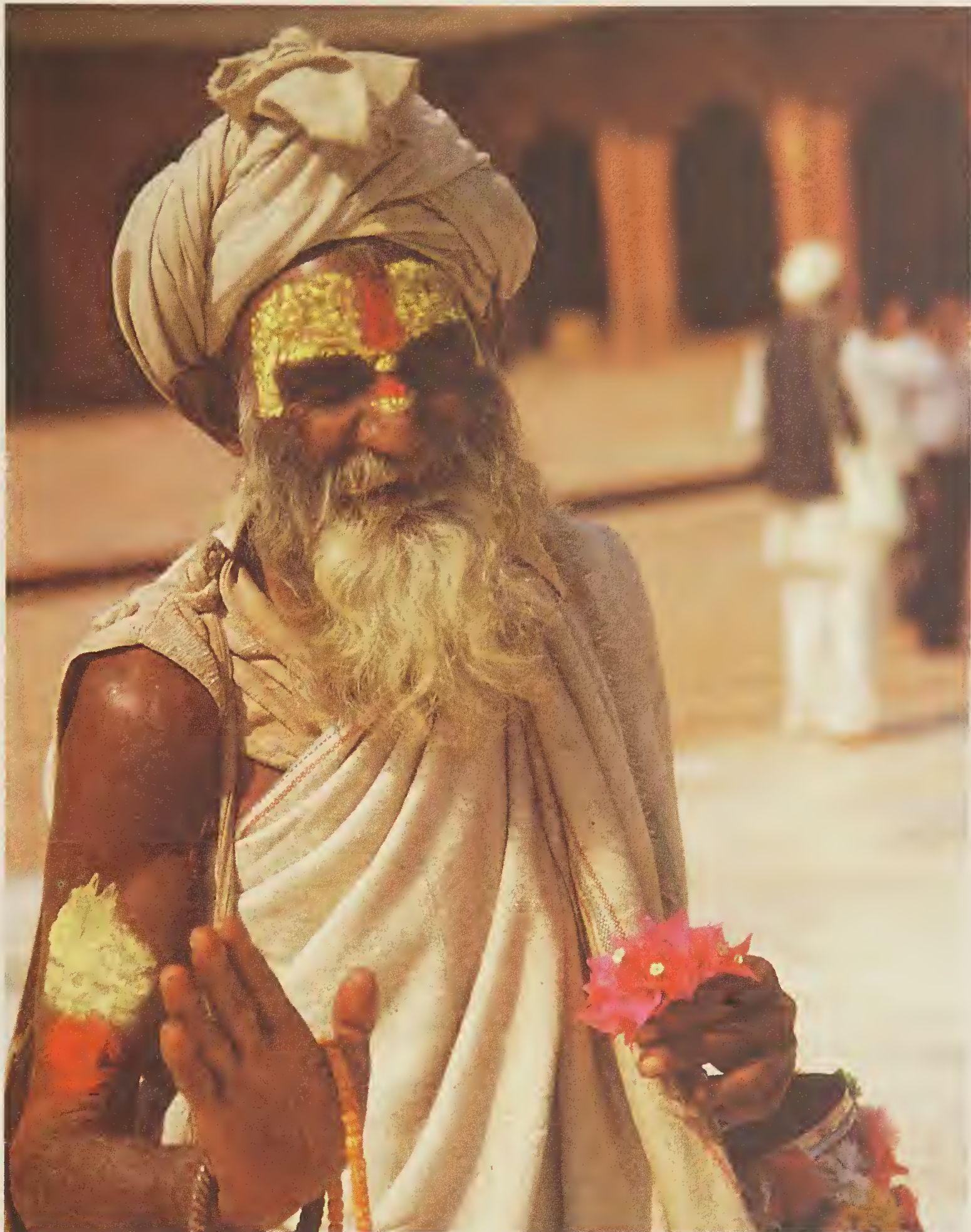
A wandering ascetic or mendicant moving in search of supernatural powers, Siddhi (magical-spiritual powers) or God. Sadhus are found in holy cities or in high mountains doing penance. They are governed by various cults and its tenets. They are both respected and feared by people for they are believed to both curse and bless with the aid of their acquired miraculous powers.

SIDIS

Of African origin, they came by sea to India in late medieval times and are still found as a distinct racial group in Gujarat. In the 17th century they controlled ports like Janjira and fought Shivaji's admiral Kanhoji Angre. They are followers of Islam.

TOPAS

A now obsolete term for an Indian Christian, born of a Portuguese father and Indian mother in south India. In the early history of



Sadhu, a wandering ascetic

of the East India Company, such people were enlisted extensively as soldiers and so the term was applied generally to the Company's Indian soldiers in peninsular India.

UPADHYAYA

A teacher a preceptor, who makes a living by teaching the *Vedas*, *Vedangas* and other subjects. The family priest who presides over rituals is called Upadhyaya.

YATI

A bikshu, an ascetic who has totally renounced worldliness and is completely withdrawn from material affairs.

TRIBES (OLD)

The old tribes of India were the first owners of the land. Waves of incursions from the north drove them into remote hills and forests. Their history is lost in antiquity but their oral traditions and myths sustained their identity.

Central India, Lower Bengal, Andamans

Baigas – dwelt in the Pachmarhi hills of Madhya Pradesh.

Bhils – one of the first tribes to be brought under British rule in 1818. Today they are found in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Bhuiyas – lived in the Bhagalpur region of Bihar.

Bhumij – Bengal-Orissa border.

Gonds – southern Orissa.

Hos or *Lanka Kols* – Bihar and Bengal.

Juangs Kharrias – Cuttack (Orissa).

Khatties – said to have opposed Alexander of Macedonia in the Punjab (See History), and then migrated to central India.

The *Khonds* were found in the Cuttack and Ganjam areas of Orissa.

Kolis at one time inhabited the Gujarat area and were known to be armed robbers.

Korkus belonged to the Pachmarhi region of Madhya Pradesh.

The *Korwas* inhabited the eastern Madhya Pradesh.

The *Mairs* were driven by the Rajputs from the hills and they settled in the Aravalli hills of Rajasthan.

Mundas occupied the Chhota Nagpur area of Madhya Pradesh.

Santhals originally inhabited the Rajmahal hills on the Bengal-Bihar border.

North-East Frontier

The *Abors* of this region had decidedly Mongolian features. The *Angami Nagas*



Sidis of Gujarat

occupied the tract of land immediately to the east of Kachar.

The *Bhutias* were Lamaic Buddhists, of the Mongolian type, closely allied in blood and language to the Tibetans.

Chalikata Mishmis were a hill tribe with Mongolian features.

Garos believed themselves to be aboriginals but claimed relationship with the English.

Jantias and *Kasias* (*Khasis*) were a muscular race inhabiting the Khasi hills of Assam.

Khamtis were said to be a branch of the same Shan race to which the people of Laos and Thailand belong.

Kukis of north *Kachar* live on the Burma border.

The *Lepchas* are settled mainly in Sikkim and Darjeeling.

The *Lushai*, an offshoot of the *Kukis*, live in south Kachar and Chittagong (Bangladesh).

Miris and the *Hill Miris* were of Mongolian stock.

Mishmis were traders and possessed large herds of cattle. *Nagas*, one of the largest tribes, are known for their war dances and beautiful shawls.

Shendus of the Arakan hills made their own gun powder.

Singphos like the *Khamtis* entered the Assam valley only around 1793; they possessed Mongolian features.

South India

The *Chenchus*, of mixed descent lived in the Eastern Ghats. This ancient tribe is commemorated musically in the raga, *Chenchu Kamboji*.

Todas settled in the Nilgiris and live and dress in a distinct style.

Irulas are traditional snake-catchers and are now employed in Tamil Nadu to pursue their ancient calling.

Lambadis, the nomadic tribe of Andhra Pradesh.

TRIBES (CURRENT)

While many of the tribes mentioned in the old list are no longer in existence or have merged their identities, it is also equally true that today there are many splintered groups; there is also a variation in the names (or spelling) of some of these tribes.

APA TANIS

While the Nishis, Hill Miris and other related groups merge imperceptibly into one another, the Apa Tanis who constitute a separate endogamous community retain their own territory, language, customs, traditions and an economy different from that of all other tribals of Arunachal Pradesh.

CHENCHUS

Andhra Pradesh. They are an ethnic splintered group left behind by the material advance of the great majority of the south Indian population. They now inhabit the rocky hills and forest areas of the Nallamalai range flanking the Krishna river.

GONDS

They stand out in the tribal population by sheer numbers and by the size of their vast habitat. The majority of the Gonds today are found in the Satpura plateau of Madhya Pradesh. The former princely state of Bastar is the home of three important Gond groups – the Murias (or Miris), the Hill Murias and the so-called Bison horn Murias. Gonds are also found in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

JATAPUS

In the hills of Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh, the Jatapus live in symbiosis with the Saoras, members of both tribes dwelling either in the same or adjoining villages.

KHOVAS

A small tribe inhabiting about ten villages in the Bomdila Circle of Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

KOLAMS

The Kolam tribe lived until a generation ago some 400 km from the habitat of the Konda Reddis, in the highland of Adilabad (northernmost district of Andhra Pradesh). The reservation of forests has largely eroded the lifestyle and economic basis of this tribe. The Kolams were known for their skill in divination and performed the role of priests, with the result the tribe got the popular name 'Pujari.'



The Gonds, natural marksmen

KONDA REDDIS

Konda (hill) Reddis of Andhra Pradesh dwell in the wooded hills on the sides of the Godavari river where it breaks through the Eastern Ghats.

MONPAS

A group greatly influenced by Tibetan culture, the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh are high altitude dwellers. Buddhist beliefs and traditions dominate their cultural life.

NAIKPODS

The same wooded hills that serve as a habitat for the Kolams also served the Naikpods. Like the former, the Naikpods also fell victim to the forest reservation policy and today they are found only in insignificant numbers.

NISHIS

A large population of closely related tribal groups extends over this mountainous region of Arunachal Pradesh, previously known as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). According to tribal tradition all Nishis are descended from a mythical an-

cestor called Takr and it is believed that his sons were the forefathers of three branches of the tribe, namely Dopum, Dodum and Dol.

SAORAS

Also known as Savaras, they are spread widely over Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, concentrating in the Ganjam district of Orissa and Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

SHERDUKPENS

This small tribe inhabits a single valley of the Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh. According to the Sherdukpens they are descendants of a Tibetan prince.



PERFORMING ARTS

Rang Manch

Everything traditional in
the realm of performing arts goes back
to Bharata's *Natya Shastra*.

Dance, Music, Theatre
are an enduring part of the Indian
cultural milieu

DANCE

CLASSICAL

Bharata Muni: Ancient sage, author of the Natya Shastra, a comprehensive treatise on the performing arts composed c. 2nd century BC – 2nd century AD with about 36 chapters that treat minutely of the theory of music, dance, stagecraft, poetics and furnish details of costume, makeup and stage arrangements.

This book is a source and foundation of all traditional dance, music and theatre even today.

Legend goes that to suitably instruct and entertain the gods, demons and men, Brahma the creator evolved a fifth Veda from the existing four (See Philosophy; Religion: Hinduism) and taught it to the sage Bharata. This codified instruction was composed into the Natya Shastra.

Bharata's first play, staged by his hundred sons and the specially created apsaras (celestial dancers) of Indra's heavenly court was Amrita Manthana (Kshirasagara Manthana, the churning of the Ocean of Milk) in the amphitheatre of the Himalayas.

Shiva himself, the Lord of the Dance, was so enchanted that he sent his disciple Tanduv to teach Bharata the true elements of dance which came to constitute those chapters in the Natya Shastra called Tandava Lakshana.

ABHANGA

Signifying 'off centre,' an iconographic term for a slightly askew standing position. Many deities assume this posture as does a dancer who depicts a goddess or a heroine.

ABHINAYA

Expression, the portrayal of moods, emotions and a narrative through the use of mudras (hand gestures), postures of the body and facial expression. An actor is an 'abhineta' and an actress is an 'abhinetri'.

ABHINAYA-DARPANA

Lit. 'mirror of gesture', a medieval work on histrionics by Nandikeswara.

AHARYA ABHINAYA

Costume, make-up and jewellery that aid the performer in expressing a mood, emotion or dramatic element.

ANGIK-ABHINAYA

Gestures and stances that aid abhinaya.

ARDHA – PARYANKA

A sitting position (asana) in which one leg, usually the left, is tucked up on the seat while one dangles down. This is often used in iconography, (statues and paintings) both Hindu and Buddhist and in dance occurs only if a 'throne' is a ballet prop.

ARDHASAMA (PADA) STHANAKA

'Half-straight standing posture,' in which one foot is firmly planted while the other foot and leg indicate a movement.

BHAVA

Mood. Classical dance is supposed to be a combination of bhava-raga-tala (mood - melody - rhythm).

GATI

Walk or gait, stylised for each dance form, called chaal in Kathak, chali in Orissa, nadai in Bharata Natyam.

MUDRAS

Hand gestures that complement 'abhinaya' or emotion expressed on the face and through body gestures (See Abhinaya). Two such are Abhayamudra (palm up-raised) used as a gesture of protection or reassurance and Abhishekamudra, the sprinkling hand seen in Buddhist images and classical dance. Abhayamudra is characteristic of the Buddha, the Tirthankaras, and the Hindu pantheon, especially Vishnu the Preserver of the world and Shiva as Nataraja in his Anandatandava dance.

RASA

Emotion: There are nine major classical categories of emotion or navarasa for abhinaya.

Adbhuta	wonder
Bhaya	terror
Bhibatsa	disgust
Hasya	humour
Karuna	pathos
Rudra	anger
Shringara	love
Vira	heroism
Shanta	peace

Except for Kathakali, most classical dances do not explore the full range of rasas today but restrict themselves to Shringara rasa and Bhakti bhava.

Bharata Natyam

Originally, Dasi Attam or Sadir, it was the dance of the devadasis or temple dancers. Rooted in the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata, it was changed to the more respectable 'Bharata Natyam' in this century, when non-devadasis took to learning and performing it. Dasi Attam flourished in areas of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, which were less affected by invaders. Even the Aryans came south as pioneer settlers, not invaders and others came as missionaries and traders, unlike in the troubled north. Since cultural continuity was more or less intact, the classical dance of the south developed a strong regional identity. Kings, particularly Rajaraja Chola (See History: Dynasties), fostered the tradition of temple dancing and devadasis were women of high social standing with the exclusive right to be educated.

While Hinduism was affected in the 12th and 13th centuries in north India, the south too, felt the tremors. The Hoysala empire in Karnataka was destroyed and the Pandyan kingdom centred in Madurai was cramped (See History: Dynasties). But Dasi Attam was unaffected and in the 14th century, the south was reunited by the Vijayanagar empire. When it fell, the Deccani sultans took over as patrons of art: both 'salamu' (which is a salutation at the end of a Padam) and Tillana are adapted from Persian terms.

The Mughal influence did not disturb Dasi Attam and in the 18th – 19th centuries, the Maratha kingdom of Thanjavur under the Bhosales gave a new fillip to Dasi Attam's patronage.

However with the advent of Victorian morals in the last half of the 19th century, Dasi Attam fell into disrepute until it was revived by E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale, who founded Kalkshetra. Following Rukmini Devi, other high caste families allowed their daughters to dance. Shanta Rao, Kamala Laxman, Kausalya, Indrani Rehman and especially Yamini Krishnamurthi were the nucleus of the new movement. The late T. Balasaraswati and Kalanidhi Narayanan were the foremost exponents of abhinaya. The present format of Bharata Natyam was arranged a hundred years ago by the Thanjavur quartet of brothers, Chinniah, Ponniah, Sivanandam and Vadivelu. The repertoire of Varnams, Padams and Tillanas was researched and developed considerably at Kalkshetra, the first dance-and-music institution open to non-devadasis in Madras in the 40's. Dance-dramas or Kuravanjis (based on gypsy soothsayers) too, were recreated there.

ADAVU

The basic dance unit or sequences of steps of Bharata Natyam. There are 15 groups of adavus described by Bharata in the *Natya Shastra*. There are 108 of these positions (known as karanas) for the body together with gestures for the hands and movements for the legs and feet. They are carved in detail in the gateways of the great temple at Chidambaram, dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. The temple was begun around 600 AD (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Temples).

ALARIPPU

From the Telugu, Alarimpu, an offering of flowers. The opening piece of every Bharata Natyam performance, it is an overture, indicating through fairly simple positions and movements, the elaborations to follow. It is also an invocation, first to the deity and the stage (the consecrated ground or rangabhumi), next, to the presiding spirits of the musical instruments accompanying the performance and to the learned in the audience and finally to the rest of the gathering.

ARDHA-MANDALI

A basic position in Bharata Natyam, in which the heels are kept together with the feet turned out sideways and the knees are bent to form a rhombus between the trunk and feet. Also called Ara-Mandi in Tamil.

BOL/SOLLUKATTU

Rhythmic dance syllables, bol in Kathak, sollu kattu in Bharata Natyam.

JATISWARAM

After Alarippu, an item of pure dance that highlights the rhythmic interplay of drumbeats and dance syllables. Voice, drum and body are the three 'instruments.'

PADAM

Songs of love danced after the exhaustive Varnam. Lyrical and slow, rich in subtle variations of abhinaya, the Padam allows the dancer tremendous scope for expressing emotional nuances. The bases of emotion are sambhoga (union) and vipralamba (separation).

RECHAKA

A combination of head, shoulder and hand movements in the Alarippu where the dancer glides the neck from side to side.

SHABDAM

Lit. the word; the third piece in a recital where lyrics are introduced for the first time, after the purely rhythmic items of Alarippu and Jatiswaram ending with a salutation.



Krishna depicted in Bharata Natyam

TILLANA

A dance of pure joy with intricate steps in different speeds, a sparkling conclusion to the performance, followed by 'mangalam,' a shloka invoking god's blessings on all.

TIRMANAM

A short, scintillating succession of adavus (See Adavu) that gives pause or concludes a dance sequence. Adavus combined with tirmanams in complex rhythmic patterns are Jatis, of which there are five.

VARNAM

Lit. colour. Pure dance and storyline, richly coloured by abhinaya are integrated. A Varnam opens with a tirmanam and is followed by a song of high musical and poetic quality, punctuated by paragraphs of pure dance. The mood is often 'shringara', love, and the context is religious or erotic. The climax of the Varnam is the charanam, the epitome of nritta (pure dance).

Kathak

A classical dance form of the north, it was evolved by traditional story-tellers (kathaks), based on the mystic circular dance with the Gopis, said to have been created by Krishna on the night of Sharad Purnima, by the banks of the Yamuna as told in the *Bhagavata Purana*. It began in temples but after the advent of Muslim rule in the 12th century, it was picked up by courts and courtesans who evolved the technical base of complex footwork and graceful positions. Themes turned from religious to secular with an emphasis on Shringara (erotic) rasa.

Several compositions are purely rhythmic while some allow enactment of Radha-Krishna lore (See Raslila), which dominates Kathak literature from Brindavan and Mathura (See Holy Places). Kathak spread to other cities and developed into distinct schools (gharanas), notably at Jaipur and Lucknow.

A Kathak performance begins, as in Bharata Natyam, with an invocation, the Ganesha Vandana.

It is followed by 'thata,' the technique of moving the eyes, face, neck, shoulders and arms. Then comes Amad where the dancer begins circling in rhythmic steps. The next stage is Sangeet, the stress being on time and musical syllables (bol), similar to the Jatiswaram in Bharata Natyam.

Verses of bols called Todas now follow on the pakhawaj, in a pure dance (nritta) piece called Paran. Each rhythmic passage begins with the hastak, the first basic position that starts a thata, in which the fingertips touch lightly. The sound of the dancer's ankle bells is controlled to rise

from the smallest whisper to an orchestral crescendo of a hundred bells.

After this climactic passage, the dancer launches into interpreting songs, concluding with a Tarana, a rhythmic pattern of pure dance reminiscent of the Tillana in Bharata Natyam.

Kathak portrays both Tandava (masculine) and Lasya (feminine) movements and explores a range of abhinaya through devotional songs and love lyrics.

AMAD

Entry for dancer(s) in characteristic rhythmic gait.

CHAKKAR

Pirouette or turn that marks the end of choreographic 'paragraphs,' finishing on the last beat of the taal with head aside and arms raised at an angle.

GATH

A story told in dance.

GHARANAS

The main centres of Kathak styles are Lucknow and Jaipur. Kathak in its present form was established in Lucknow more than a century and a half ago by two Rajasthanis, Prakashji and his son Thakur Prasad, scholars who hailed from the Ras tradition (Krishna, incidentally is worshipped as 'Thakur,' Lord, in parts of north India). Thakur Prasad's three sons, Bindadin Maharaj, Kalka Prasad and Bhairon Prasad, developed the dance further. It was the first two, in fact, who raised the Lucknow gharana to national recognition. Bindadin, an ardent Krishna devotee, composed many lyrical Bhajans and incorporated Thumris, Dadras, Ghazals. Kalka Prasad built up Kathak's nritta or dance technique. His three sons, Achhan Maharaj, Lachhu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj brought Kathak to modern concert halls. Another eminent composer and dancer was Sukhdev Maharaj, father of the fiery dancer Sitara Devi. Kalka Prasad's best known descendant today is Birju Maharaj.

In Jaipur, Kathak was refined and expounded by an old maestro, Girdhariji and his sons Hari Prasad and Hanuman Prasad, both Krishna devotees. Some of their eminent successors were Jaya Lal, Narayan Prasad Sunder Prasad, Mohan Lal, Chiranji Lal, Guru Narayan Prasad and Durga Lal. The two schools have no strict differences and are known nationally.

LAYAKARI

The dancer's mastery of rhythm variations (tala) and tempo.

LEHRA

Single phrase of music played repeatedly

as accompaniment on a sarangi to a tabla performance.

PALTA

A pure dance movement involving a turn.

TATKAR

Footwork.

TORAH

Short dance piece called Tukra in music concerts when sung after the main items.

UPAJ

Lit. emergence. In Kathak, the 'upaj ang' denotes the visible development of an idea from its seed by the dancer, when a lyric is spoken or sung first and then explored through dance.

Kathakali

Lit. story-play, Kathakali is the masked dance theatre of Kerala. Combining Dravidian Earth Mother worship with dances of Aryan origin, it is danced to the throbbing beat of the chenda, a long cylindrical drum of pre-historic origin. It is a blend of several forms of devotional dance theatre in the region and Sanskrit plays from Kalidasa, Bhasa and Harsha. The stories were drawn from temple bards called Chakyars whose solo performances were called Prabandha-Koothu. Group performances are called Kudiattam – which became the forerunner of Kathakali (See Theatre).

Around 1650, the zamorin of Calicut introduced 'Krishnattam' based on Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. It is still performed at the Krishna temple at Guruvayoor. Kathakali borrowed from Krishnattam the innovation of letting the singers deal exclusively with the text, leaving the dancers free for choreographic interpretation.

By the 17th century an offshoot, Ramnattam, devoted to Rama, evolved and was performed like Krishnattam over eight nights.

The raja of Kottayam designed costumes for Kathakali and Krishnattam, having seen them in a dream. The raja of Kottarakara daringly wrote Kathakali plays in Malayalam, not Sanskrit, which proved tremendously popular since it was accessible to all castes. In the 18th century, the maharaja of Travancore wrote new plays as did his younger brother and grand nephew. Kathakali was now a distinct form and built up a tremendous repertoire, including the plays of the poet Irayiman Thampi and his gifted daughter Tankachi.

In the 19th century, with British interference Kathakali went into a decline. But the poet Vallathol Narayana Menon

fought to revive it and in 1930 set up the Kerala Kala Mandalam near Shoranur, bringing together great gurus and attracting new students.

CHAKYAR

Reciter of sacred texts in Kerala temples; the Chakyars were the guardians of the Kathakali dance-theatre tradition for several centuries.

KALARI

Training school which emphasises gymnastics and special massage with herbal oils (See Mind and Body).

KALASAM

Eight short, pure dance pieces.

KHANDAS

Four-line stanzas that make up the text of Kathakali dance dramas.

MUDRA

Stylised hand gesture. Most dances have 24 basic mudras but Kathakali has developed a vocabulary of 700. There are single hand (asamyukta hasta) and double hand (samyukta hasta) mudras.

MUKHABHINAYA

Facial expression; in Kathakali mainly through the eyes (nayana), with eight 'glances' forming its basis.

SADHAKAM

Dancer's exercises:

Mai Sadhakam – body exercises

Kal Sadhakam – footwork

Mudra Sadhakam – study of gestures

Mukhabhinaya Sadhakam – exercises for facial expression

The first two groups are for pure dance (nritta) and the others for dramatic interpretation (abhinaya).

Kuchipudi

A village in Andhra Pradesh on the banks of Krishna, 12 km from Masulipatnam, it was once called Kuchelapuram and was the home of the religious dance-drama, created by a Krishna devotee, Siddhendra Yogi in the 16th century. Legend says he was asked by Krishna in a dream to write a play on the *Parijata Apaharana*, or how the lord was asked by his wife Rukmini to get the fabled, fragrant Parijata tree from Indra's garden and how his other wife Satyabhama coveted it. Siddhendra Yogi needed actors to stage his play and at the village of Kuchelapuram, he found Brahmin Krishna-bhaktas who agreed to help him. The play became an annual tradition in neighbouring villages too. In 1675, Abdul Hussain Tana Shah, the nawab of Golconda was so impressed, he granted



An Odissi stance

Kuchelapuram to the Brahmins along with adjoining lands, conditional to maintaining the play tradition – which still continues. Other Krishna plays and 700 Padams by Kshetrayya of Muvvuru enriched the Kuchipudi repertoire as did the songs of Thyagaraja and Jayadeva.

Kuchipudi shares adavus, jatis, Padams and Varnams with Bharata Natyam but differs in special items like Abhishekam (describing a deity in 10 minutes from birth to apotheosis) and in special footwork passages full of tala (time/beat) variations, called kannakole, which is similar to the layakari of Kathak dancers from Jaipur and Lucknow. In the last 35 years, women too began performing Kuchipudi – short solo extracts from the dance dramas, whereas the actual plays are rarely performed in Andhra villages.

Kuchipudi plays are staged at night in temple courtyards with no curtains before congregated devotees. First, a hasyagadu (clown) enters and capers about, indicating the start of the play. There is an off-stage invocation from Jayadeva's *Gita - Govinda* seeking the blessings of the gods. Musicians, led by the nattuvanar (conductor) appear and sing a prayer honouring Balatripurasundari, the goddess of the Kuchipudi temple, followed by a long sloka about the meaning of the ensuing play, its importance to people and their moral duty to listen to and learn from its message.

DARU

An introductory piece in which a dancer, shows some foot and head movements

hidden behind a sheet held up by two volunteers. The sheet is suddenly whipped away and he steps forth and dances more elaborately. There are many kinds of Darus. Some of the legendary performers and gurus were Kuchipudi Brahmins like Lakshmi Narayan Shastri and Chinta Krishna Murti who excelled in roles like Satyabhama in *Bhamakalapam*; later gurus include Vedantam Chinna Satyam.

Manipuri

A classical dance of the north-eastern region of ancient origin it reflects the change from Shaivism to Vaishnavism, especially to Krishna worship.

The earlier Manipuri dance forms like the Lai Haraoba and Leisem Jagoi, the three old dance styles of Chappa, Konglei and Moirang all contributed to Manipuri's classical wealth. The Lai Haraoba is particularly beautiful, telling the story of Shiva (Nong-pok Ningthou) and Parvati (Panthoibi). The story of the lovers Khamba-Thoibi was added to it as the Moirang Parba (Thoibi was a princess of the Moirang dynasty).

Classical Manipuri has several characteristic elements.

Abhinaya: The inner emotional basis for a dancer's interpretation of the roles she/he plays (See Abhinaya).

Bhangi Parengs: Basic sequences of body position set to different taals (beat cycles), called Achavba Bhangi Pareng, Brindavan Pareng, Khurumba Pareng (devotional postures), Ghostha Bhangi Pareng and Ghostha Brindavan Pareng. The first two are Lasya (for women's roles) and the last two Tandava (vigorous masculine movements).

Chali: Traditional dance composition used in Lasya (feminine) and Tandava (masculine) dances in madhya or medium tempo to the teen taal (eight matras or beats). It is used as a finale to the five important Bhangi Parengs or sequences of dance positions (like karanas in Bharata Natyam).

Choloms: Tandava dances for men only with rhythmic whirls, dramatic leaps and movements drawn from nature, animals and birds. *Kartal* (cymbals) and *Pung Lhadom* (drum) are Tandava dances.

Manjire (Small cymbals), **Holom** and **Kubakishei** (clap dance): Dances by women on Krishna's birthday and on chariot festivals (Rath Yatra).

Rasakas: Group dancers of ancient origin, described in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*.



Abhinaya in Mohiniattam

Manipuri Ras

In the last quarter of the 18th century, the ruler of Manipur, Maharaja Bhagyachandra was influenced by the cult of Gaudiya Vaishnavas (See Holy Places: Sages and Saints: Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) and devised a Ras dance based on the Radha-Krishna theme. Performed by a group of dancers, it became an exquisite dance form. Two dancers enact Radha and Krishna while others play the Gopis or shepherdesses who dance around them (Radha always wears a green skirt and the Gopis, red). There are six Ras types: Vasanta Ras, Maha Ras, Kunja Ras, Nitya Ras, Ghoshta/Gopa Ras, Ulukhal Ras (See Raslila).

Mohiniattam

The dance of 'Mohini' the enchantress, practised in Kerala as the feminine counterpart of Kathakali. It uses stances of the body particularly of the feet, which are similar to Kathakali but the movements are very graceful and feminine (Lasya), with much expressive use of the eyes, neck and hands. The costume is in stark gold-edged cream skirt and blouse with a characteristic top-knot on the side of the head.

The name derives from the old legend of Bhasmasura, a demon granted extraordinary powers by Shiva. He was promised invincibility and Bhasmasura

could turn anyone to ashes by placing his hand over his head. When he tried to test it on Shiva, the deity fled and was saved by Vishnu, who distracted and then destroyed the demon by beguiling him in the guise of Mohini, a beautiful woman, and inviting him to dance. The demon forgot to be careful. Copying Mohini's graceful steps, he put his hand over his own head and was promptly reduced to ashes. Later when Shiva saw his beautiful saviour he fell in love with her. Their union produced a son called Hariharaputra or Ayyapan symbolizing Shaiva-Vaishnava synergy (See Holy Places: Temples – Sabarimalai).

Odissi

The classical dance of Orissa. The art is centred in Puri and Bhubaneswar and its stances are found carved in the ancient rock-cut Jaina temples of Khandagiri and Udaigiri, in the nat mandapa (dance area) of the Sun temple at Konarak, and in the ornate halls of the Rajani and Venkateswar temple at Bhubaneswar and the Jagannatha temple, Puri (See Holy Places).

The Odissi technique was preserved by great gurus and their pupils, the Maharis (devadasis or temple dancers) whose tradition is traced back to the 2nd century AD. They were adopted by the Puri Jagannatha temple in the 6th or 7th century AD.

The Maharis were greatly esteemed in that Sanskrit era and included royal princesses like Chandrika Devi. Boy dancers called Gotipuas were attached to the temples c. 1500. They also helped protect the temple and supervised rituals.

Odissi is thus rooted in devotional ritual and is drawn, like all classical styles, from Bharata's *Natya Shastra*. It is based on three classical elements: bhava (mood), raga (melody) and tala (rhythmic timing), as well as natya, that is a compound of pure dance (nritya) and abhinaya (interpretation).

Just as Bharata Natyam bases its movements on basic dance units (karanas), Odissi uses bhangas, the highly elaborate principal dance positions. The four bhangas of Hindu art found in dance and sculpture are samabhangha, abhangha, atibhangha and tribhangha.

The pakhawaj (drum), cymbals and the singer are the accompanists, while the guru (who may also sing) calls out the bols or tala mnemonics. The main text of Odissi is the Sanskrit poem, *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva (See Literature) that was officially instituted as the one dance text in the Jagannatha temple c. 13th century AD. Also used are texts by old royal composers like Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanj or Kabi Surya Baladeva Rath and Gopal Krishna.

FOLK

East

BAISAKH BIHU

An Assamese non-religious dance celebrated in Vaisakh (See Festivals) after the Bihu harvest festival. Boys and girls dance freely together to drum beat and chorus.

CHHAU

A mimetic dance found in Seraikella (Bihar), Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and Purulia (West Bengal). The Mayurbhanj form alone abstains from the use of masks. Chhau is both a solo and a dance drama with many characters. Its movements are highly energetic and taut, based on the gait of wild animals and the motions of harvesting and hunting. The themes are drawn from secular life and from the epics and the *Puranas*. Chhau is traditionally performed around mid-April every year during local festivals and religious rituals.

DANDA NATA

Men perform this dance during the Chaitra Parva festival (April) in Orissa. The stories are from the epics and the dancers (some dressed as women), perform solos and compositions for four dancers to the dholak and the Oriya pipe, the mahuri. A synthesis of song, dance and drama, Danda Nata is comparable to the Jatra of Bengal (See Theatre).

JATAJATIN

From Mithila, Bihar, danced by girls and young housewives in courtyards on full moon nights in the monsoon. The accompanying song tells the story of the lovers Jata and Jatin who were separated, endured many trials and finally reunited.

KHEL GOPAL

A complex cyclic dance on the Krishna theme ending with a Maharas sequence.

ORIYA HARVEST DANCE

Mother Earth is worshipped with a plaintive song to which rows of men and women sway slowly, imitating harvest movements like cutting corn and binding sheaves.

SANCHAR (BAHAKA NATA)

An Oriya drum dance for a group of 40 men or a duet that enacts the stories of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

North

BHANGRA

The popular rural dance for men in the Punjab, full of vigour and spirit, done to the beat of the dholak. Danced at Baisakhi in mid-April, it imitates movements connected with farming and celebrates masculine

strength. The Dogras of Jammu dance a similar Bhangra.

CHAMBA DANCE

Dance of the Gaddi shepherdesses of this beautiful Himalayan region, done in two circles to the clapping of hands and pretty gestures, at a lively trot. The men step martially to a fastpaced song about old legends.

CHAPPELI

A dance of the Paharis or hill people of Kumaon performed at weddings and springtime. Couples dance holding a mirror and a handkerchief.

GIDDA

The Bhangra's counterpart danced by the women of Punjab. Full of graceful swirls and supple arm movements.

HIKAT

A brisk springtime dance for young boys and girls in Jammu.

HIMACHALI DANCES

On the borders of the Garhwal Himalayas, the women of the polyandrous Jaunsar tribe dance at springtime, carrying brass trays. Both men and women dance in the Jadda and Jhainta festival with free swinging, rhythmic steps. The Thora is another old dance, staging mock battles.

JHUMAR

(Ghoomar) Rajasthani women's dance for Holi and other festivals with a circular quick-step that emphasises every third beat in seven.

JOHRA

A vigorous, joyful dance for the whole community in the Himalayan villages. All castes, both men and women join in during festivals, linking arms in a large circle and alternating movements.

KAJRI

A rural monsoon dance to the beat of the dholak, propitiating the rain god Indra and the fire god Agni, who quickens seeds. An elaborately decorated jhula or swing is part of the festivities.

NAUTANKI

(See Theatre).

KARAN

Post-harvest worship of holy trees in Shahabad preceded by fasting and prayers, culminating in group dance to the beat of the Mandardrum.

KULU DANCES

Himalayan dance done in May and October in honour of the goddess Tripurasundari; the men, in tunics, trousers, Kulu caps and shawls, stand in a circle, holding

handkerchiefs. The songs recall old chivalric legends and praise the deities while silver-mouthed longhorns and drums resound in the Kulu valley.

KUMAONI DANCE

Group dance for men in the Kumaon hills of Uttar Pradesh, at Dussehra, the autumn festival (See Festivals). Clad in white tunics, tight trousers and red sashes, they move in slow circles to the beat of a dholak, a long S-shaped trumpet, ransingha, and cymbals.

RASLILA

In the 15th – 16th century the Vaishnava saints who settled in the Braj region of north India evolved a devotional dance drama based on the Ras Panchadhyayi of the *Bhagavata Purana* (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranas). It became famous as Raslila (See Manipuri Ras).

As the name suggests the performance is made up of two related sequences – Ras and Lila. The Ras has Krishna dancing with Radha and his Gopis.

To this was added Krishna's divine sports or Lila and together they came to be known as Raslila.

Raslila plays are specially enacted during Janmashtami and Holi festivals at Mathura, Brindavan in the Braj region.

ROUF

Lively harvest dance by fifteen traditionally dressed girls of Jammu and Kashmir.

South

GHANTA MARDALA

A drum-and-cymbal rhythmic group dance for men in Andhra Pradesh, with songs based on epic stories. The tempo, with changing steps, rises to a stirring climax.

KAIKOTTIKALI

Danced in Kerala, tells the story of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati and Kamadeva's (Cupid's) role in it. Young boys and girls in white form a circle and sing along, keeping time by clapping one another's hands in a measured beat.

KARAGAM

A religious folk dance of Tamil Nadu, to propitiate the rain goddess Mariamman. A dancer leaps in a frenzy with a huge tiered pot of flowers balanced on her head.

KODAVA HARVEST DANCE

Dance of the Huttari in Coorg, the Karnataka district famed for its martial people and coffee. The men don long black tunics, white trousers, sashes and turbans. They dance in a circle, with shields and long

canes, in a vigorous masculine style, to the pipes, drums and the song of Erawa farm labourers.

KOLATTAM

Danced by girls of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh using lacquered sticks and moving in formations of squares and circles hitting their criss-crossed sticks to the beat of a traditional song. It is somewhat akin to the Ras Garba of Gujarat.

KUMMI

Danced on Pongal, the Tamil New Year and harvest festival (See Festivals). There are different kinds of Kummi – the flower Kummi celebrating nature's gift, the housewife's Kummi, a playful dance on household chores, the milkmaid's Kummi, Saraswati Kummi and the famous Kummi dedicated to Tamil Nadu by nationalist poet, Subramania Bharati (See People).

OTTAN TULLAL

A pantomime dance of Kerala, akin to classical Kathakali. A single dancer, with face painted green and sporting a jewelled crown dances energetically to the music of a singer, drummer and cymbalist. Danced for hours in the courtyards of the great temples during festivals, the themes are drawn from the epics and classical Malayalam literature.

PINNAL KOLATTAM

A variation of the maypole dance. Dancers carry painted sticks in one hand to tap the other sticks and plait the ribbons hanging from a pole with the other hand as they dance around it.

SARI

Harvest dance of rural Kerala, danced by young men and women in spotless white, forming squares and lines. The beat of the madala (drum) and cymbals take the tempo to a fast climax.

TAPATTIKALI

Rural dance for women in Kerala to honour Shiva. An older woman begins the song and leads the dancers, who circle round, clapping in rhythm.

THANJAVUR DUMMY HORSE

The 'Poikkal kuthirai' of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, is danced by men in temples with traditional music, and enacting mytho-historical themes. They wear animal frames made of wood, cloth, paper, spangles paints and feathers. Each 'animal' weighs about 50 kgs. Some of the themes danced are 'Rama Shastri' (the Maratha Peshwa judge, a byword for integrity), comic interludes between a peacock and a zebra, rajarani (king and queen) dances, Draupadi-



Sidi tribal dance

Bhima (from the *Mahabharata*) and Shiva-Parvati.

VASANTATTAM

A springtime dance, extolling Mother Earth, danced by rural boys and girls in a simple four-step metre. The boys carry flower-wreathed poles.

West

DAKHILA

To songs, cymbals and dholak, folk dancers of Maharashtra enact Krishna's childhood pranks.

DANDIYA RAS

In the Limbdi region of Gujarat, a unique dance on the *Ramayana* theme danced only by men. Dressed in flounced jackets, they beat short lacquered sticks as they quickstep in a whirling circle to the beat of drums, songs and cymbals. This dance is extremely popular amongst all Gujaratis and the festival allows boys and girls to meet on Dandiya evenings.

GARBA

A dance of great antiquity for men and women in Saurashtra, Gujarat, it is credited to Usha, the Assamese princess who came to live in Dwaraka as Krishna's grand daughter-in-law. Danced during Navaratri, Holi and in spring (See Festivals: Basant Panchami) the Garba is a favourite on the national stage at school and community cultural gatherings. Joyful songs and light, graceful, circular movements akin to the Raslila are typical of the Garba, which celebrates the Krishna theme.

LEZIM

More a form of drill, boys and girls in Maharashtra stage Lezim performances on Ganesh Chaturthi and Gokulashtami (See Festivals; Mind and Body).

LIMBDI DANCES

Limbdi is also the home of devotional song and dance forms called Ganapati Bhajan and its own version of the Raslila.

RANDAL DEVI

A simple, dignified dance by Gujarati women in praise of Randal Devi, a titular village deity. On the day dedicated to her, a bower is made and a figure is drawn with seeds and corn on a seat inside. A 'face' is made from an inverted coconut shell and lamps are lit. Girls and women dance, sing and mime songs of praise.

TAMASHA

(See Theatre).

TIPPANI

Dance of the Koli fisherwomen. Long sticks (tippani) are twirled with great dexterity in a circular pattern.

TRIBAL

There are many tribal dances all over India of which about 60 are representative. But they are all seasonal and religious and closely akin to folk dances. Nature and custom are the strongest inspiration. Linked arms, circular patterns of movement and rhythmic claps or rattling of sticks, spears or bells are common features. Naga and Santhal dances are particularly popular as are the gypsy dances of the Lambadis and Sidis (See People: Tribes).



Kumar Gandharva, eminent Hindustani singer

MUSIC

There are two main strains of classical music in India broadly categorised as Hindustani and Carnatic. Both systems are based on the 'raga' or the specific arrangement of notes of varying character. The core animating principle of classical music is three-fold: *gyana* (knowledge), *karma* (duty or work) and the application of the two to *bhakti* (devotion or faith). Great composers like Purandaradasa, Tansen, Amir Khusro, Thyagaraja and others contributed to evolving classical conventions.

Folk and tribal music revolves around nature's bounty and the landmarks in life: birth, marriage, death, hunts, harvests, rains, travel, separation and festivals.

Concepts and Techniques

AABHOG

'That which is fully absorbed' – the concluding part of a Dhrupad or Dhamar composition.

AKAAR

Singing 'aa' with mouth open wide.

ABHANG

Popular devotional folk song from Maharashtra c. 13th century. Abhang composers tried to communicate the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhagvata Purana*, through these songs, which are mostly in a popular metre, the Obi, and can occur in any length and raga.

The first known Marathi poet, Mukundaraja (12th century) composed a few, but Abhangs truly caught on as a genre with later composers like Dnyanadeva, Eknath, Namdeva and Ramdas. Some of Namdeva's Abhangs are included in the Sikh holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The most prolific and well-known composer was Tukaram (17th century). About 4,500 Abhangs by him survive (See Sages and Saints).

ABHOGA

The fourth and last part of a Prabandha-sangita or Dhrupad.

ADARANG

Pen name of Firoz Khan, Khayal composer at the court of Mohammad Shah 'Rangila,' (Mughal, ruled 1719-1748 at Delhi). Extant



M.S. Subbulakshmi singing a bhajan

songs reflect Sufi thought (See Khayal; Religion: Islam – Sufism).

ADI RAGA

Primordial raga(s), the earliest known in the classical system. Can also mean basic or 'parent' raga of a derivative raga.

ALANKAR

Lit. ornament. Musically, a phrase that beautifies. In the Carnatic tradition, Alan-karam are sets of scale exercises.

ALAP

From Sanskrit 'alapana,' to spread; the measured introduction and development of a raga. In Hindustani music, its stages include barhat, bol alap, behlava.

ANG

Lit. part. Musically, 'style,' as in Thumri ang, Khayal ang, Tappa ang. Raag ang is used to describe that raga whose characteristic is found in other ragas, eg Gunkali, Vibhas and Ramkali are Bhairav ang ragas (See Dance – Kathak – Upaj Ang).

ANSH

The first note, sa.

ANTARA

Lit. within, used to describe a variant of the note Ga (Gandhar); antara means a 'difference,' applied to the second part of a Khayal. Geet, Bhajan and Dhrupad also have antaras. Musicologist Pandit Amarnath writes of a saying 'antar mein hai to jantar mein hai,' (your instrument will have what is within you).

APASWARA/BESURA

Out of tune, off-key.

AROHI-AVAROHI

The ascending order and descending order of notes in a raga (See Raga).

ASA DI VAR

Asa is a 'deshi' raga from the Punjab. Asa di var are verses from the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Sikh scripture) sung in raga Asa, early morning in Gurdwaras (See Shabad, Deshi Sangeet; Religion: Sikhism).

ASHTAK

Octave (Saptak, plus one).

ASHTAPADI

Lit. 'eight verses,' a lyric with eight stanzas, immortalized in the Sanskrit poem *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva. Ashtapadis are usually sung like Dhrupads and composed in Dhamar tala, Roopak tala and Chautala. They are also called Haveli Sangeet (See Haveli Sangeet).

Some say the Ashtapadis are the works of the Ashta Sakhas or eight friends, all Krishna devotees: Surdas, Nandadas,

Krishnadas, Kumbhadas, Chaturbhujdas, Parmanand Das, Govindswami and Cheetaswami.

ASTHAYI

From the Sanskrit verb *stha*, to stay; sthayee – that which is stable; the first part of a composition.

ATAI

From 'ata,' intuition, used for a person who sings or plays without formal training.

ATI VILAMBIT

Extra slow.

BAAJ

Playing styles particular to the sitar, veena, tabla and pakhawaj. Does not apply to sarangi, flute or shehnai which produce long notes and can follow the vocal style (Baaj ka taar is the main string on a sitar or sarangi on which notes are produced).

BADA KHAYAL

Lit. 'large' Khayal, refers to the slow (vilam-bit) tempo of the Khayal.

BAHAO

Lit. flow, the musical fluency achieved after years of practice.

BAKAR TAAN

From the word 'bakra,' goat; a note that sounds unmusically like the bleat of a goat.

BANDISH

Lit. fixed order to be observed in Khayal compositions. Also called bol bandish (lyric order).

BANI

From Sanskrit Vach, saying; the sayings of saints that were sung (See Shabad).

BARAMASA

Lit. 12 months, folk songs from Uttar Pradesh describing everyday life, sung through the year.

BAUL

From 'Vaatul,' frenzied. The devotional folk form of Bengal. These wandering singers gather ritually each year at Kendu in Bengal for mystic song fests (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts).

BE-DUM

Lit. without taking a breath or non-stop.

BEENKAR

A player of the been or veena; in the north, a player of the veena, rudra veena, Saraswati veena or vichitra veena. 'Beenkar gharana' is a term for families with a long tradition of playing the rudra veena (See Musical Instruments).

BEHR

Metre in poetry.

BELA

Indian name for violin (from English viola).

BHAIRAV

From the Sanskrit words 'bhee,' – fear and 'raee,' – sound. The ragas Bhairav and Bhairavi derive their names from men and women devotees of Shiva who lived in cremation grounds and were believed to exorcise the spirits of the dead. Also called the 'Adi Raga'.

BHAJAN

Any devotional song. M.S. Subbulakshmi, the great Carnatic vocalist is known nationally for her soulful bhajans, particularly those of Meera Bai (See Sages and Saints).

BHAKTA

Devotee, religious and musical.

BHAND

A community of entertainers and jesters who used music in their acts. Became a derogatory term for musicians in the 19th – early 20th century.

BHAT

Bards whose profession was to sing of Rajput chivalry and ancestry and inspire people to valour in battle. The best-known is Chand Bardai, who composed *Prithviraj Raso*, in praise of Prithviraj Chauhan the last Hindu ruler of Delhi in the 12th century.

BHAVA

From the verb *bhu*, to exist (as an emotion), the totality of emotional expression (See Dance – Bhava).

BHED.

Clues to musical understanding.

BIRAH

Lit. separation; folk genre of songs from Uttar Pradesh on the theme of separation.

BOL

A line or phrase of the asthayi (composition); a beat or set of beats on the tabla. Bol alaap, bol baant, bol banao and bol taan are musical patterns.

BONGA

Unmusical, off-key and ignorant, unaware of being off-key.

CARNATIC MUSIC

The ancient Dravidian system of scales and melodies was part of temple music, dance and processions. It was Purandaradasa (See Literature: Kannada; Sages and Saints) who fused the Aryan and Dravidian systems in the 15th century. It is this

blend that has come to be known as Carnatic music which has its own special vocabulary.

Geetam: Simple student's songs.

Tana varnam: Or varnam, literally a musical essay on a raga, exploring it through lyrics and swara (notes). It usually has three musical 'paragraphs': pallavi, anupallavi, charanam.

Padavarnam: Less elaborate than a varnam with more lyrics.

Kirtanam: Lit. 'praising the lord's glory,' usually devotional songs.

Kriti: Evolved as the highest type of Carnatic composition, with nobility of raga, theme and lyric. Always devotional and meant to be uplifting.

Samudaya kriti: Sets or collections of kritis on a related theme like the Navavarna, Navagraha, Pancharatna, Panchalinga and Navaratri kritis.

Ragamalika: A song comprising several ragas.

Manipravala chera: One composition with alternating lines in two or three languages (Swati Tirunal composed several; See Literature: Malayalam).

Vritam: Tamil devotional songs: Tevaram, Tiruvachakam, Tiruppugazh (See Literature: Tamil).

Devarnama: Descriptive canticles in Kannada like Padams.

Chindu: Special songs for boatmen, for devotees climbing hills to reach a shrine or for catching snakes.

Daru: Song varieties used in operas and dances (See Dance – Kuchipudi) with melodic, rhythmic and verse passages.

Pallavi: Meant to develop the raga elaborately in all its splendour, exploring various speeds and leading it through exciting note and verse patterns. A Pallavi normally took three to four hours, but today it is wrapped up in 40 minutes or even less.

Geyanatakas: Operas.

CHAAND

Metrically accurate rhyme of a lyric.

CHAENDAR

Restful, peaceful music.

CHARAN

A bardic community of Rajasthan which sings heroic poetry about the Rajputs and announced their entries and exits from the darbar (court).

CHATURANG

Lit. four parts. The four musical forms or features in one Hindustani composition:

such as tarana, taan, tukra and sargam. One capable of singing in any classical mode like Khayal, Thumri, Bhajan, Ghazal is called a 'Chaumukhi gayak,' or 'four faced singer.'

CHATURJATI

A taan (musical notes or pattern of notes) with a four-note pattern.

CHAUPAI

A four line couplet from Tulsidas' *Ram-charitmanas* (See Literature: Hindi). A metre.

CHILLA CHADANA

A 40-day vow taken by a musician to practise rigorously in solitude with only the bare necessities in hand – a sort of musical retreat. 'Chilla' (lit. 40) can be observed several times in a life time, with the vow taken in the presence of a pir (spiritual guru), in a place of worship.

CLASSICAL CONCERTS

Though both northern (Hindustani) and southern (Carnatic) music originate in the *Sama Veda* and in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, they are markedly different. In a standard Hindustani concert of four hours, six or seven compositions are presented. The first two or three ragas are greatly elaborated. The succeeding songs are lighter and of shorter duration.

The pakhawaj or tabla (drums) demonstrates the thekas (important beats), the sum (beginning of a tala) and bols (mnemonics) clearly. A Hindustani musician does not therefore keep the beat with his hands, but follows the percussion with his mind.

In Carnatic music, a three and a half hour concert may feature as many as a dozen compositions. The main performer is accompanied by a mridangam (drum), veena, flute and violin. The musician starts with a Varnam, a crisp composition, usually *Vatapi Ganapatim Bajebam* in raga Hamsadhwani, a traditional invocation to Ganesha. After several Kritis, raga alapana (development) is built tier by tier, rather than in the cyclic structure of the north. This is the apogee of a concert, called Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi. It incorporates solos by the violinist, and the mridangam player which is called Tani Avarthanam. The concert ends with lighter songs like Padams, Javalis and a Tillana.

DAD

From Persian 'praise.' Formalised terms of appreciation from a Hindustani gathering (mehfil) equivalent to clapping in Western concerts. The commonest is "Wah, Wah!" but complex ones according to musicolog-

ist Pandit Amarnath could range from "Subhan Allah!" (praise be to god) to the proverbial "Lalit ki khairat bat rahi hai!" ('Raga Lalit is being given away to all,' a deeply moved compliment from the then Pir of Ajmer Sharif for a particularly soulful rendering by Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan of the Kirana gharana).

DADRA

Semi-classical song form, sung in any tala. Any dhun (tune) may be improvised in the Thumri style to sing a Dadra.

DAGAR

A family of Dhrupad singers, originally from Jaipur, adherents of the *Dagara vani* style of Dhrupad singing (See Dhrupad).

DESHI SANGEET

Regional music like community songs, folk tunes, classical ragas like Desh, Piloo, Asa, Behari and song forms like Pahari geet and Rajasthani maand (See Margi and Deshi).

DHAANDAL

To make a mess, used when a musician distorts or ignores traditional principles.

DHADI

A community of professional singers from the Punjab who also play the sarangi.

DHAMAR

A Dhrupad composed in Dhamar tala.

DHRUPAD

Derived from an ancient form of stately measured song, originally called *Dhruva-pada Prabandha*. The prevailing song form in India for many centuries, described in Sarangadeva's 13th century musical treatise, *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, sung by Amir Khusro and the kalavids (musicians) of the Delhi sultanate's court and eminent 15th century singers from the Deccan like Baijnath and Gopal Naik.

The Dhrupad was adapted by Raja Man Singh of Gwalior in the 15th century and the Bijapur sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah I wrote a treatise on it, the *Kitab-i-Nauras*. Tansen, the great musician at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar, modified it and four vanis or styles of Dhrupad evolved thereafter: Gandhara, Khandara, Dagara and Naohara. These vanis travelled to other gharanas or musical centres like Jaipur, Lucknow, Rampur, Varanasi and Mathura. In the 19th century, the Dhrupad was sung extensively in Bengal. And in this century, the Dhrupad is the preserve of the Dagar Brothers, a family of distinguished musicians descended from Tansen.

DOHA

Couplet in Hindi or its dialects Avadhi and Bhojpuri, sung to music called Dohraa in Punjabi and Dubota in Marathi. The best known Dohas are by the medieval saints of the Bhakti period – Kabirdas, Surdas and Rahim (See Sages and Saints). Pithy folk wisdom and a gentle tolerance of human frailty mark a typical Doha which can also be satirical or highly spiritual in content.

DRUT

From Sanskrit verb 'dru,' to move quickly or forcefully.

EKAR

Vocal practice, with the mouth shaped to produce 'E'.

FUNKAR

Hindustani artist (from fun, art).

GAMAKA

From the Sanskrit root gam, (to acquire pace). Refers to the elaboration of a note.

GANDHARVA

In Hindu myth, a community of celestial singers (Indian music was originally called Gandharvam). Gandharvadesha, their country, was believed to be in the north-west of the subcontinent and some scholars attempt to identify it with the ancient city of Kandahar in Afghanistan.

GARAJ

Lit. 'roar,' a term of appreciation for powerful voices.

GAT

From gati, tempo, meaning movement; applies to compositions played on the sitar, sarod and tabla but not flute, sarangi or shehnai.

GATRI VEENA

The throat; from 'gatri' (singer) and 'veena,' musical instrument.

GAVAIYYA

Vocalist.

GAYATRI

From Sanskrit, *gaya* (to sing) and *trayi* (to protect) – the most important prayer or mantra in the *Rig Veda*, said to protect those who sing it. Composed by the legendary rishi Vishwamitra.

GEET

Any song that can be set to music. A geetika is a collection of songs.

GHAIRAT

A musician's aspiration to the highest personal standard.

GHANDI PHOOTNA

Ghandi, the pendulum in the throat; phootna, to break – a term for the voice quality of adolescent boys.

GHAPAD CHAUGH

Hotch-potch, a messed-up recital, also called Ghapla.

GHARANA

A school of Hindustani music by style and tradition. Gharanedaar, from gharana, refers to traditional music or to a musician coming from a traditional musical background.

'Gharanedar bandish' is used for a composition from a particular school reflecting a typical style (See Agra, Gwalior, Jaipur, Bhendi Bazar, Rampur, Sham Chaurasi, Kirana and Indore gharanas).

Agra gharana: Well-known school whose exponents are said to be descendants of Tansen's daughter, Saraswati. Stalwarts of this gharana have been Ustad Ghulam Abbas Khan, Nathan Khan, Bhaskar Bua, Faiyyaz Khan and Vilayat Hussain Khan.

Bhendi Bazar gharana: Established by Chajju Khan, Nazir Khan (d. 1919), and Khadim Hussain Khan, three brothers, all vocalists from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh who settled in Bhendi Bazar, Bombay. Other names include Anjani Bai Malpekar, Shiv Kumar Shukla and Ramesh Nadkarni. A great number of the compositions of this gharana are in praise of Lord Shiva.

Gwalior gharana: One of the oldest gharanas of Khayal singing from which others have branched off, it traces its ancestry to Nathan Peerbaksh. Among its many followers are Rehmat Khan Bawle, Vishnu Digamber Paluskar and L.K. Pandit.

Indore gharana: Traces its ancestry to Chhange Khan, his son Shahmir Khan, whose son was the famous Ustad Amir Khan. Originally from Kalanaur in Haryana, Shamir Khan settled in Indore. This gharana was greatly influenced by the Bhendi Bazar and Kirana gharanas. Prominent musicians are Pandit Amarnath, Srikanth Bhakre, Singh Bandhu, Poorbi Mukherjee and Gokulutsavji Maharaj.

Kirana gharana: This gharana takes its name from Kirana, a small town near Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Well-known musicians from this gharana were Abdul Wahid Khan, Abdul Karim Khan and Sawai Gandharva.

Patiala gharana: A famous gharana of Punjab, an offshoot of the Gwalior School. Originally a family of musicians from Kasur, a small tehsil of Lahore district (now in Pakistan) served at the court of Patiala, from where the school derives its name.

Well-known musicians were Fateh Ali (called Taan Kaptan), Ali Baksh (called Jarnail, and in fact the two together were known as Alia Fattoo), Kale Khan, Mian Jan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Akhtar Husain (son of Fateh Ali), and Ashiq Ali Khan.

Rampurgharana: An offshoot of the Gwalior gharana. Wazir Khan Saheb, Allauddin Khan, Hafiz Ali Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar and Amjad Ali Khan are all musicians of the Rampur or *Seniya gharana*. This gharana was a major source for Bhatkhande, who received a great deal of material from the Rampur musicians for his collected works (See Tansen).

Sham Chaurasi gharana: A gharana of musicians (sometimes called Shameye) from the small town of Shyam Chaurasi near Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Its only surviving musician is Salamat Ali, now based in Pakistan and even he sings mostly in the Patiala style. One of the best-known musicians of this gharana was Sain Karim.

GHASI

Optimum finish, after arduous practise, when notes begin to sound well-finished.

GHAZAL

Lyrical poem form in Urdu. The first couplet is called matla, the last, matka. Couplets in between are called misra (poetically) and antara (musically). Each couplet is semantically complete in itself.

GINATKAR

Master of taal. Layakaar is a master of laya (tempo), not just beats (tala) (See Laya).

GRAMA – MOORCHANA – JATI

Ancient Aryan musical scales, precursors of the present raga system on which Indian music is based and described in the *Natya Shastra* by Bharata Muni (See Dance). The music of the time was based on three scales derived from the *Sama Veda*, called grama, lit. field. They were Shadja grama, Madhyama grama and Gandhara grama or the prime, middle and celestial fields.

Of these, Shadja Grama alone remained as the supreme scale because of the Panchama, the strong, harmonic note inherent in it. Five notes, each expanding into a scale, from each of these three gramas, were used for melodies. These five scales, Ri – ri, Ga – ga, Ma – ma, Pa – pa, Ni – ni, were called Moorchanas. The Moorchanas later became the 72 'Melas' in Carnatic music and 10 'Thats' in Hindustani music. Melodies derived from the 'shuddha scale' 'Sa' and the five Moorchanas were called 'jatis' which later gave rise to ragas.

GULUKARA

Female Hindustani vocalist.

GURU

From Sanskrit, gu – ignorance, ru – to remove or destroy, the preceptor who gives life direction. Guru-bhai and guru-behen (brother and sister) are disciples of the same guru, a relationship as important as that of actual siblings.

GURU MUKHA VIDYA

Lit. knowledge from the mouth of the guru – the oral tradition of learning (See Philosophy: Shruti, Smriti).

GURU-SHISHYA PARAMPARA

From Sanskrit. Param – other and Paraha – chain or link, thus: tradition. In the arts, the 'master-disciple tradition' (See Shishya).

HAVĒLI SANGEET

Havelis were the mansions of the rich who patronised singers of Bhakti songs from the Vaishnava tradition (Vishnu Sampradaya), especially the work of the Ashta Sakha, sung in Dhrupad style, and the *Ashtapadis* of Jayadeva (See Ashtapadi).

HEM-KHEM BHIJANTA HAI?

'Does (he/she) know Hem-Khem,' a euphemism for questioning a musician's skill with rare ragas like Hem Kalyan and Khem Kalyan which are rarely sung and so minutely differentiated that only a true master can render each safely. Hem is a compound of ragas Kamod and Shudh Kalyan and Khem of Kamod and Yaman Kalyan.

HINDUSTANI MUSIC

Just 75 years ago Hindustani music was put in order by Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande who devised the 10 'That' system of classifying ragas. Formerly this was a large, unwieldy system that evolved from Grama through several stages to a system called Raga-ragini to Dasa-dasi, a melange of Shastric, folk and Islamic elements (See Grama-Moorchana-Jati).

KHAYAL

Lit. an idea. Lyrical offshoot of the Dhrupad, mainly developed by Nyamat Shah 'Sadarang' and his nephew 'Adarang' at the court of Mohammad Shah 'Rangila' in the 18th century (See Adarang).

MARGI AND DESHI

Of the two main types of ragas evolved over the centuries, Margi which means 'showing the path' is the primordial classical raga. Kharaharapriya, Hanumatodi, Hari khamboji are among the first Margi ragas. Some well-known Margi ragas were created and slotted within the Mela system by Patnam Subramanya Iyer. Prominent Carnatic

composers in Margi ragas include Ramaswami Dikshitar, Muthiah Bhagavatar, Thyagaraja and Shyama Shastri. Deshi ragas are those evolved naturally from folk melodies all over India. Dravidian temple music also evolved well-known ragas like Bhairavi and Kambodhi among others (See Deshi Sangeet).

QAWWALI

A popular question-answer song form sung by two 'opposing' groups. Originally a vehicle for religious discourse, from the time of Amir Khusro (See Chishti Parampara).

RABABI

A community of musicians in Punjab before the partition of India and Pakistan, descendants of Baba Mardana, a disciple of Guru Nanak (See Religion: Sikhism). Rababis, as they came to be known, were attached to Gurdwaras. They represented a very gentle mingling of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu culture.

RABINDRA SANGEET

The songs composed by the famous Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore. These include popular folk tunes.

RAGA

A musical scale formed by the permutations and combinations of the 12 svaras or basic notes (sa – ri – ga – ma – pa – dha – ni – sa) in their ascending and descending order (arohi and avarohi). The raga system evolved from scales (Moorchana) and derivative scales (Jatis). They were classified according to regions, seasons, times, scientific and aesthetic element. Visual expression of the ragas is found in the Ragamala paintings (See Visual Arts: Miniatures).

RAGAS

Below is a list of some Hindustani ragas and closely allied or similar Carnatic ragas.

<i>Hindustani</i>	<i>Carnatic</i>
Abhogi Kanhra	Abhogi
Adhana	Atana
Ahir Bhairav	Chakravaka
Alaiya Bilaval	Bilahari
Arabi Malhar	Sama
Bagesri	Sriranjani
Bairagi Bhairav	Revathi
Bhimpalasi	Abheri,
	Sindhu Dhanyasi
Bihag	Behag (old Byagu)
Bihangada	Begada
Brindavani	Brindavana Saranga
Saranga	
Desh	Kedara gaula
	(Minus teevra 'Ni')
Dhani	Shuddha Dhanyasi
Durga	Shuddha Saveri

Gunkali
Hindol
Huseni Kanhra
Jaijaiwanti
Jeevanpuri
Jog
Jagiya
Kalavati
Kalavanti
Kalingada
Kaunshi Kanhra

Khatma
Lalit
Latika
Madhumad, Megh
Madhuvanti
Malkauns
(Malava Kausha)

Nagaranjini
Patadeep
Rageshri
Shahana Kanhra
Shivaranjani
Shuddha Kalyan
Sindhura, Saindhavi
Sundarkauns
Lanka Dahan
Note: Kanhra and Kanada are linked but distinct in their respective systems.

SAMAGANA

From 'equilibrium' and 'that which can be sung.' The verse of the *Sama Veda*, the first in metre or laya.

SAPTAK

Musical scale, of seven notes: sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni. Later the scale evolved into an Ashtak or Octave with the inclusion of 'Sa' at the end. Each note has its own story. 'Sa' from Shadaj is literally Shata or six and 'Ja' means 'born of' ie, 'born of six' organs. Hindus believe 'Sa' represents Shiva on earth.

Ri, Rishabh, from the Sanskrit 'Rish,' which means to roar; also refers to the bull of Shiva, Nandi.

Ga, Gandhara, the third note, associated with Gandharva Desh, the mythical land of celestial singers and musicians, the Gandharvas. In fact Indian music was described as 'Gandharvam' in ancient times.

Ma, Madhyam, the central note. Pa, Pancham, lit. the fifth note.

Dha, Dhaivata, the sixth note, from the Sanskrit root 'Dhyeya,' to concentrate. Ni, Nishada, the seventh note, drawing its name from a community called the Nishadas who lived on the borders of Ayodhya in ancient times, according to the *Ramayana*. Thus Ni is a 'border' note on the scale.



Hari Prasad Chaurasia in a Hindustani 'baithak' (concert)

SARGAM

Singing by naming the notes (sa ri ga ma), thus highlighting the structural patterns in music. A speciality of the Kirana, Indore and Bhendi Bazaar gharanas.

SAWAL-JAWAB

Lit. question-answer, for a passage when equal phrases (with a minimum of three notes each) are in dialogue. Used for a duet between two instruments or a vocalist and instrument when their dialogue builds up to a dramatic climax.

SHABAD

Devotional songs from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. When the audience also joins in the recital, it becomes Shabad Kirtan.

SHASTRIYA SANGEET

Lit. scientific music, the term commonly applied to Indian 'classical' music. Its elements, as defined by the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata Muni are shruti (key or pitch), raga (melodic scales), tala (rhythm) and laya (tempo). It is rendered through geeta (vocal music) and vadya (instrumental music).

In the medieval age (from 12th century AD) music in north India was influenced by Persian and Arabic traditions, though 'Hindustani' music is more or less based on the Grama-Moorchana-Jati system of Bharata (See Grama-Moorchana-Jati). In south India, the *Natya Shastra*'s tala system was preserved almost intact with suitable modifications in Carnatic music.

Hindustani music has many schools or gharanas (musical styles) such as Gwalior,

Agra, Rampur, Kirana, Benaras, Delhi, Patiala, Vishnupur, Mewati and Lucknow (See Gharana).

In Carnatic music, the main styles are named for important royal courts – Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu), Vijayanagaram (Andhra Pradesh), Mysore (Karnataka) and Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala). These styles called pani or bani are most discernible in the technique of playing the veena.

SUM/SAM

Equal, the state of equilibrium reached at sum, the first beat of the tala cycle, emphasized when the previous cycle is complete.

TANKAR

A stroke on any instrument.

TAPPA

Lit. 'jump,' it refers to verses drawn from Punjabi folklore. The first line, a dummy with no meaning, keeps the metre. The second gives the full meaning of the couplet. Sung straight with no embellishments.

TARANA

Very popular Hindustani form, with Persian and Arabic mnemonic sounds like 'yal-lallah.' However with the historical alienation of Persian from the Hindustani mainstream, the Tarana is apparently on the decline.

THIRUVARUR

Renowned pilgrim centre on the banks of the sacred river Kaveri, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, called *Panchanadakshetra* (place resonating with divine sound) and *Janma-moksha sthala* (place of liberation from earthly life). The belief goes that those

who are born in Thiruvavarur and die at Varanasi attain mukti or liberation.

All three saint-composers of the Carnatic music trinity – Shyama Shastri, Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar – were born here, within a few streets of each other near the great temple dedicated to Neelothphalamba, Vanhinatha, Kamalamba and Thyagarajishvara. Adjoining the temple is the biggest Pushkarni (sacred tank) Kamalalaya, and the biggest temple chariot in south India. There are also separate temples for each of the Navagraha (See Cosmos: Astrology).

THUMRI

Popular light form of Hindustani music from Thumak (gay, flippant) and Ri (belonging to). Mainly about Shringara, Bhakti and Karuna rasa, with suitably light ragas like Khammaj, Piloo, Kafi and Jhinjhoti.

VANI

From the Sanskrit 'vach' to speak, used here for the sayings of the eminent people, eg, Gurbani is Sikh devotional music written by gurus and saints. Also 'style'.

VIVADI SWARA

Vivad is to argue or clash. A note not meant to be used in the raga.

YOGA

The tradition of Yoga gives enormous importance to music as a spiritual discipline where God is conceived as Nada Brahma, the repository of the power of sound. The deepest, most primary vibration of the cosmos is believed to be the syllable *Om* uttered by Shiva when he danced – and the universe was animated and illumined by

his energy. Music is thus revered as Nada Yoga, the 'musical path' to the highest, most ecstatic state of spiritual being, *Satchidananda* – also described as the Ultimate Truth.

Music is also called the Panchama Veda, the fifth knowledge. Brahma the creator is said to have composed it by taking shruti and laya (melody and tempo) from the *Rig Veda*, bhava (emotional expression) and tala (beat) from the *Yajur*, raga and gati (pace) from the *Sama* and sahitya (words) and stuti (praise) from the *Atharva*.

People

ABDUL KARIM KHAN

Maestro of the Kirana gharana (1872-1937), sang mostly in raga (half tone); mastery of Khayal and Thumri, rendered sargam in Carnatic style. Best known disciples: Sawai Gandharva, Roshanara Begum (See Kirana gharana).

ABDUL WAHID KHAN

Maestro of the Kirana gharana, died at Kirana (1871-1949); known as Behre Wahid Khan for his poor hearing; mastery of improvisation (barhat). Best known disciples: Hirabai Barodekar, Firoz Nizami, Shakur Khan (sarangi exponent), the Mattoo family (See Kirana gharana).

AHMED JAN 'TIRAKHWA'

Tabla maestro (1878-1976), 'Tirakhwa,' to thrill. Disciple of Munir Khan of Meerut, earned the sobriquet in childhood for dexterity on tabla; was court musician at old court of Rampur, played for Bal Gandharva's Gandharva Natak Mandali.

ALLADIYA KHAN

Great singer of Atrauli, Jaipur gharana (1855-1946). Specialised in varying tempi. A Muslim who wore the Hindu sacred thread and was proud of his Rajput heritage. Disciples – his two sons, Munji Khan, Kesarbai Kerkar, Bhaskar Bua Bakhle, Mogubai Kurdikar and Shankarrao Sarnaik (called the 'Maharashtra Kokila').

AMAN ALI KHAN

Singer, ustad (maestro) of the Bhendi Bazar gharana, Bombay, (1804-1953). He borrowed khatkas (variations) from the Carnatic style of rendition and was a gifted composer, rare proponent of the Merukhand system of singing Khayal (See Saranga Deva).

AMIR KHAN

Vocalist of Indore gharana (1912-1974), famed for unique style of raga elaboration. Revived a song form called Tarana (See Indore gharana -Tarana).



Begum Akhtar, the Ghazal Queen

AMIR KHUSRO

Poet musician (1253-1325), court poet to 11 Slave dynasty sultans, including the notorious Ala-ud-din Khilji (See History: Dynasties). Khusro was a disciple of the Sufi saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi (See Sages and Saints) and belonged to the Qawwal Bachhe tradition of music. Said to have furthered the development of Qawwali, Khayal, Khamsa and other song forms, and instruments like the dholak (drum) and sehtaar, a prototype of the sitar (See Qawwali, Musical Instruments).

ARIYAKKUDI RAMANUJA IYENGAR

(1891-1967). Carnatic vocalist whose birth centenary was celebrated in 1991. Pioneered the transition of Carnatic music from temple courts and private gatherings to modern concert halls 50 years ago. Adapted the old concert format to the shorter demand of a stage performance.

BABA ALLAUDDIN KHAN

Sarod maestro (1862-1972) from Tripura, disciple of Wazir Khan of Rampur. Settled in Maihar (MP) and developed the 'Maihar band' of orchestral musicians. Famous disciples: Ravi Shankar (son-in-law), Ali Akbar Khan (son), Annapurna Devi (daughter), flautist Pannalal Ghosh, sitarist Nikhil Banerjee, composer Timir Baran.

BADE GHULAM ALI KHAN

Singer of the Patiala gharana (1901-1968), a pupil of his uncle Kale Khan. Renowned for his Thumris. His pen name for several

songs was Sabrang. Disciples: son Munna Ali Khan, Meera Banerjee of Calcutta (See Patiala gharana).

BAIJU BAWRA

Bajnath Mishra or Baiju Nayak, the celebrated Dhrupad singer, composer at the court of Raja Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior (1486-1526).

BARKAT ALI

Younger brother of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan of the Patiala gharana, who remained in the Pakistani sector after partition. Moving exponent of Thumris, Ghazals and Pahari Dhun.

BEGUM AKHTAR

Akhtari Bai Faizabadi (1914-1974) was a major exponent of the Thumri, blending the Punjab ang with her basic Poorab ang style of singing. She was also known as 'Ghazal Queen,' having raised this song form to extraordinary popular heights across India. Her gurus: Ramzan Khan (Lucknow gharana), Ata Muhammad Khan, Abdul Wahid Khan (Kirana), Barkat Ali (Patiala).

BHADRACHALAM RAMADAS

Born Gopanna (16th century) into a family of singers in Andhra Pradesh, he was renamed Ramadas by a Muslim fakir singer who was impressed by his devotion to Lord Rama. Ramadas worked as a tehsildar (revenue collector) at Bhadrachalam under Tanne Shah, the Qutub Shahi ruler of Golconda (later, part of old Hyderabad



Hafiz Ali Khan, sarod maestro

state). He used unauthorized funds to renovate a Rama temple on the banks of the sacred river Godavari and was jailed for it but was later released and reinstated with honour (See Sages and Saints). His Telugu Kirtanas paved the way for later composers like Thyagaraja, Ramaswami Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri.

BHASKAR BUA BAKHLE

(1869-1922). The first Hindu to be tutored by and acknowledged as maestro by the Muslim ustads of his time. His four gurus included 'greats' like Ustad Nathan Khan (1840-1900) of Agra and Ustad Alladiya Khan of Jaipur. His disciples were Dilip Chandra Bedi and Master Krishna of Prabhat Films.

BILAS KHAN

Tansen's son. Legend says he sang what is now called Bilas Khani Todi raga at his father's funeral ceremony which moved the great singer's spirit to bless him. Thereafter Bilas Khan was acknowledged the khalifa (sultan or prime exponent) of the Tansen tradition.

CHISHTI PARAMPARA

Lit. the Chishti tradition, named after Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (Garib Nawaz 1142-1236 AD), a Sufi saint settled in Ajmer (Rajasthan) in the reign of Prithvi Raj Chauhan (See Sages and Saints). His celebrated line of disciples were Bhaktiyar Kaki (d.1235), guru of Shaikh Farid (1175-1265), guru of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia (1238-1325). Amir Khusro (1253-1325), the poet-musician was the best known disciple of

Hazrat Nizamuddin among the poets, singers, philosophers of the Chishti parampara, from which Khayal and Qawwali developed.

HAFIZ ALI KHAN

Sarod maestro (1888-1972) of the Gwalior darbar. Pupil of Ganpatrao Bhauja Saheb of Gwalior and of Chukhalalji and Ganeshlalji of Brindavan and of Wazir Khan of Rampur who also taught Ustad Allaiddin Khan of Maihar. His best known disciple is his son, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan.

HARBALLABH

Called 'baba,' a music loving fakir (mendicant) of the 19th century in the east Punjab. A commemorative music festival has been held annually from 26th to 29th December for a century now, at his samadhi at Devi Talao, Jalandhar.

KESARBAI KERKAR

Celebrated musician of the Jaipur School (1892-1977), Kesarbai was one of the foremost disciples of Ustad Alladiya Khan. She was a staunch follower of the Jaipur gayaki. Rabindranath Tagore gave her the title 'Surashree,' divine singer.

MUTHIAH BHAGAVATHAR

Early 20th century (b.1877) Carnatic musician composer and noted exponent of Harikatha Kalakshepam—a narrative form, with commentaries and topical precepts woven in—based on the epics. Appointed court composer of the former Mysore maharaja, he travelled extensively in India and composed some enduring Varnams.

MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

(1775-1835). Born into a musical family of accomplished vainikas (veena players), he spent five years of his youth at Varanasi, studying music, the *Vedas* and the *Sbas-tras*. He was thus able to use the nuances of Hindustani ragas in the Carnatic style. He visited many holy shrines and temples and composed many Sanskrit Kritis. His very first Kirti was written en route to Tiruttani Subrahmanya (Kartikeya) from Tirupati Venkatesa (Vishnu). Legend goes that Kartikeya wrote the sacred syllable 'Om' with the tip of his spear on Dikshitar's tongue, whereafter the fledgeling composer took the signature 'Guruguha'—one whose guru is Kartikeya or Guha. He composed more than 3,000 songs.

Dikshitar is said to have chosen the time of his death and gathered his disciples around him to sing his exquisite paeon (Gamakakriya kriti) to Madurai Meenakshi in raga Poorvi Kalyani. As they sang the line *Meenalochani pasa mochani*, he attained samadhi.

PANNALAL GHOSH

Well-known flautist, disciple of Ustad Allaiddin Khan, Pannalal Ghosh's contribution to music was the large flute that provided a heavy base for ragas. He died in 1960.

PAPANASAM SIVAN

A 20th century Tamil composer whose signature was 'Ramadasa', born at the pilgrim centre of Papanasam, Tamil Nadu. In an attempt to balance the Tamil quotient in Carnatic music with Telugu and Kannada, Sivan composed almost exclusively in Tamil. Some of his songs were even used in mythological films.

PATNAM SUBRAMANYA IYER

(1845-1902). Direct disciple of Thyagaraja. 'Patnam' (town) was an allusion to his living at Chennapatnam (Madras).

PURANDARADASA

(1484-1564). Purandaradasa is said to have composed around 4,75,000 songs, of which 800 are said to be now current and just 180 are popularly sung, sometimes in varying ragas. His samadhi (last resting place) is at Hampi in Karnataka. Born into a wealthy family of bankers at Purandara-ghatta (near Pune, Maharashtra), he became a dasa or wandering servant of God, calling himself Purandaradasa, with his family deity's name Vithobha, incorporated in his musical signature *Purandara Vitthala*. His songs were composed mainly in Kannada and some Marathi. Hampi celebrates his memory with music on his samadhi day.

RAJAB ALIKHAN

Great Khayal singer, born in Narasinggarh in 1874. Son of the sarangi player Mughal Khan, Ustad Rabab Ali Khan came to settle in Dewas, near Indore. Among his disciples were Shankar Samaik and Ganesh Ramchandra Behre Buwa. He died in 1959.

RAMASWAMI DIKSHITAR

(1735-1817). The scholar father of the great composer Muthuswami Dikshitar, he was himself a composer of over 300 songs in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit. Legend has it that he composed a Mandala Malika (song cycle) of 48 songs in 48 continuous days at Tirupati, as part of a vow, and thereby restored the eyesight of his second son, Chinnaswami Dikshitar.

RAMKRISHNA VAZE BUA

Well-known musician of the Gwalior gharana. Vaze Bua was the most respected among the musicians of Maharashtra and given the title of Naveen Tansen.

SARANGA DEVA

Born in 1175, Saranga Deva was a musical scholar, author of *Sangeeta Ratnakara*, the most authentic and undisputed old text on music. It explains, among other things, the Merukhand (lit. spine portion), under which 5,040 taans (patterns of musical notes rendered fast) can be conceived in seven notes, without repetition. He died in 1,247 (See Aman Ali Khan).

SAWAI GANDHARVA, RAMBHAN

(1886-1952). A disciple of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan of the Kirana gharana. Well-known disciples: Gangubai Hangal, Bhimsen Joshi, Feroze Dastoor.

SHYAMA SHASTRI

(1762-1827). The eldest of the Thiruvarur trinity, he was the Pradhana Archaka (chief priest) of Kamakshi Devi.

Shyama Shastri was an ardent Devibhakta and of the 300 songs he is said to have composed, only about 45 are current. As he was priest of a major temple, he did not train any shishyas (disciples) and so did not build a parampara (musical tradition).

Shyama Shastri's father, a Sanskrit pandit had been opposed to music and it was his mother's brothers who secretly taught him. But Shastri's sons, Panchanada Shastri and Subbaraya Shastri became eminent musicians. Shastri's direct descendants are still high priests and musicians at the Bangaru Kamakshi temple at Thanjavur.

SWATI THIRUNAL

(1813-1847). A contemporary of the Thiruvarur trinity, this king of Tiruvidadankodu

(Travancore, in Kerala) met them frequently and was no less saintly or gifted. He encouraged various other musicians and himself composed around 600 songs of which about 200 survive.

He composed in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati and Punjabi and was also an adept at several foreign languages.

TALLAPAKKAM ANNAMACHARYA

(1424-1503). His brothers are still honoured at the great temple at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, for the vast number of Sankirtanas (songs) they composed in Telugu and Sanskrit. Annamacharya is said to have composed 32,000 songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati. Copper plates discovered a decade ago revealed the text of some 12,000 songs.

TANRAS KHAN

Celebrated musician in the court of the last of the Mughal kings. A famous composition in Mian ki Todi, *Kab mori naiyya paarkaroge*, by Tanras Khan praises Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. The Tanras gharana (also known as Delhi gharana) had followers like Mamman Khan and Chand Khan.

TANSEN

Tanna Mishra, 16th century singer, composer, musicologist whose pen name 'Tansen' is so legendary that no latter-day musician has dislodged him from the status of *Sangeet Samrat* (king of music). The son of a priest, Makarand Pandey, he was picked up and trained to sing Dhrupads by Swami Haridas, an eminent singer from Brindavan.

Raja Ramchandra Baghela was his first patron. A later patron, Raja Vikramjit of Gwalior changed his name to Taan-sen, master of taan (musical notes). Tansen later converted to Islam and was known as Miyan Tansen. His career culminated at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar, a great patron of arts. He is said to be the author of three musical treatises – *Sree Ganesh Stotra*, *Sangeet Sar* and *Raga-mala*. Three popular Hindustani ragas are said to be Tansen's invention – Darbari Kanhra, Miyan ki Todi and Miyan ki Malhar. Legend has it that he caused unlit lamps to burn when he sang raga Deepak and the blaze could be doused only by the rain brought down by his daughter's rendition of raga Megh Malhar.

Tansen's daughter Saraswati Devi and his son Bilas Khan followed the Dagara Vani (See Dhrupad). Bilas Khan is said to have modified a version of raga Todi, thereafter called Bilaskhani Todi. Saraswati Devi's husband Mishri Singh was an

eminent beenkar (veena player). Mishri Singh's musical descendants are known as Senia beenkars. The Senia gharanas evolved at Rampur, Lucknow and Gwalior. Amjad Ali Khan, today's sarod maestro, belongs to the Senia beenkar gharana.

THYAGARAJA

(1767-1846). Saint-composer, grandson of Telugu poet Giriraja Kavi, Thyagaraja was a musician at the Thanjavur court. His musical devotion to Lord Rama is legendary and his Kritis uphold bhakti (devotion to god) as a musician's true vocation.

Thyagaraja was a Telugu Brahmin who composed mainly in his mother tongue and occasionally in Sanskrit. He is said to have composed over a 1000 kritis, of which nearly 400 are still sung. He left a long line of musical descendants, though no direct ones. A collection of five of his Kritis, called the Pancharatna (five gems) is the unofficial test of a musician's ability. His anniversary is celebrated with a music festival at Thiruvaiyaru, started by Bangalore Nagaratnamma, which attracts thousands of devotees in a vast musical assembly of homage.

VILAYAT HUSSAIN KHAN

(1862-1962). Composer of Khayals and Ghazals, Vilayat Hussain Khan whose pen name was Prana Priya belonged to the Agra gharana. He wrote the *Sangeetageyone ke Sansmaran*, about his musical Kirtanas in Telugu, Kannada and Sanskrit.

VISHNU DIGAMBAR PALUSKAR

(1872-1931). Gwalior gharana. Popularised music especially amongst Hindu families at a time when professional musicians were socially disreputable. His famous disciples include Onkarnath Thakur, V.N. Patwardhan, B.R. Deodhar (guru to Kumar Gandharva).

VISHNU NARAYAN BHATKHANDE

(1860-1936). Musicologist who travelled extensively, collecting thousands of compositions (Khayal, Thumri, Dhrupad, Dhamar, Dadra, Tappa, Hori) from contemporary musicians, which he published with notation. Bhatkhande categorised Hindustani ragas under his system of 10 Thats (10 sets of 8 notes each in the ascending scale, arohi). He penned several songs under the name Chatur Pandit. He also founded the Morris College of Music, Lucknow, and left a legacy of 'Bhatkhande Music Schools' across India that enabled the middle class to rediscover music which, by the 19th century, had fallen into disrepute.



Sarangi

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

It is believed that musical instruments originated in India and are said to have been used as accompaniment to the recitation of the Vedas. Music and musical instruments therefore go hand in hand to form a fundamental phase of Indian religion. The wide and detailed dissertation on musical instruments in the Natya Shastra is proof of the importance given to them in performing arts in India. According to Bharata Muni there are four classifications to musical instruments.

Classification

Avanaddha Vadya – skin covered percussion instruments like the Drum.

Tata Vadya – stringed instruments, of two varieties; ‘bowed’ like the Sarangi and Violin and ‘plucked’ like the Veena and Sitar.

Sushira Vadya – wind instruments, those that are played by the breath like the Flute and Shehnai.

Ghana Vadya – solids; these are instruments made of wood or metal like Gongs and Cymbals.

Percussion

Percussion or ideophonic instruments used to maintain time and rhythm in music and dance were the first type of instruments devised by man. These may be divided into four – wooden instruments, clay instruments, skin or hide-bound instruments and metal instruments.

CLAY/POTS

The wooden pot was the forerunner of all ideophonic instruments and is still popular today though with slight variations and names in different parts of India.

Ghatam is a strong, resonant mud pot. It has a narrow mouth which is closed with parchment and made into a Drum, used to accompany vocal and instrumental recitals in the south.

Mizhavu of Kerala is a pitcher-shaped, one-sided Drum made of bronze. It is played alternately with the hand and a stick. It accompanies Koodiyattam (See Dance) along with a pair of Cymbals.

Panchmukha Vadya or five-faced instrument which developed as a temple instrument, consists of a large vessel of copper or brass. The five tubular projec-

tions covered with cowhide form the Drum heads. At the time of playing, two small metal Drums are placed beside the main instrument to make it a seven-faced instrument tuned to a seven tone ancient scale known as Shada Grama.

DAFF

The common man’s instrument. It is also called Daphara or Dhaira and Tappu (Tamil Nadu) Dappu (Andhra Pradesh). It has a round frame about 90 cm in diameter and 15 cm in width. It is held in the left hand, gripped against the chest, and played with the right hand striking the goat or deer hide. Popularly played at festivals like Holi.

DAMA

Drum, 1 m long, carved out of wood and covered with cowhide. These are the Drums used in the Wangala dance of the Garos (See People: Tribes). They are carried by the male dancers, hung from their necks and beaten with both hands.

DAMARU

A smaller version of the Drum used by Shiva to express his triumph. It is cylindrical in shape with the ends covered with leather. Two thick knotted strings are tied to the middle and as the damaru is moved to and fro in the hand the knotted ends beat on the leathered surface to produce sound. Today the Damaru may be seen with the roadside (monkey and bear) entertainers.

DHOLAK

An old instrument of north and central India, it has various names – Dhol (Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra) Nalor Ravalon Ki Mandal (Rajasthan), Pambai (Tamil Nadu) and Pamba (Andhra Pradesh). It is a cylindrical barrel with the two sides covered with deer or goat hide. It is played with both hands, fingers and part of the palm.

KANJIRA

Dafli is the northern variation of the southern Kanjira. It has a circular wooden frame over which a piece of hide is stretched. The frame is provided with four or five slits containing pieces of metal strung along with clusters of ankle bells suspended from hooks. When struck, there is a pleasing resonance.

MRIDANGAM

One of the most ancient, refined instruments, it draws its name from ‘mrida’ meaning clay, hence the original Mridang (as it is known in the north) was of clay and only later it was made out wood. Its right side is known as the female side and left is the male side. According to mythology the instrument is the invention of Brahma and Ganesha played it for the first time to mark

the victory of Mahadeva over the demon, Tripurasura. The Mridangam is an essential accompanying instrument in all concerts in the south. Khol (barrel) of Bengal, Surmandal (clay shell) of Orissa and Pung (wooden shell) of Manipur are all variations of the Mridangam.

NAGARA

Drums in India are too numerous to be recorded in a single listing. The Nagara is the most primitive of these, first made of wood then of clay and finally of brass and copper. It was still later divided into two parts for different sounds – madeen (female) and nar (male). The first is smaller and placed on the right and the second which is bigger is placed on the left. It is used today in the north in religious ceremonies and folk dances. Traditionally the Nagara had a place in the castle watch tower (in a room called naubatkhana) and its beat announced royal arrivals and departures.

PAKHAWAJ

The north Indian counterpart of the Mridangam, it was invented to accompany the Dhrupad and Dhamar singers. The player hangs the instrument from his neck or plays sitting, with the Drum in front. The Pakhawaj has a bigger circumference than the Mridangam. It accompanies classical songs and dances, especially the Odissi (See Dance).

TABLA

A most important percussion instrument, the Tabla, an offshoot of the Pakhawaj is almost synonymous with Drums in India. It is said to have been invented by Amir Khusro in the 14th century when he divided the Pakhawaj into two and named them Tabla. One part has the danya and madeen while the other has the banya and dhama or duggi denoting male and female sides. The Tabla is widely used with all other instruments as well as vocal music.

Metal

Metal musical instruments came after the wooden ones with skin covers. These may be classified under three categories.

CLAPPERS

These have an important place in folk and even classical dance. They are made of spherical alloy disks with a depressed centre. The sizes, shape and weight vary.

Manjira – Used all over the country in temples, two small disks are held by loops and struck together.

Tal – Heavier and thicker than the Manjira, it is popular in south India.

Kansia, Jhanj – Both disks, they are held

by looped cords and struck together to produce a beat. The Jhanj is used in bhajans.

Chimta – Lit. tongs. Known by different names, metal blades are loosely 'nailed' on both ends and brought together for rhythmic accompaniment.

The second category of metal percussion instruments are those which are struck with a stick, hammer or rod. Ghan-tas or bells play a significant role in most eastern religions in India as few Hindu temples are without bells. These may be of copper, brass or alloy. There are shrines which have bells weighing upto 50 kgs, made of saptadhatu or seven metals.

Thali – Often an improvised instrument to keep beat especially in dance training. Schools used the thali to sound the beginning and end of classes. It is also known as 'the gong' in the west.

The third type of metal instruments are those that produce a high pitched sound when shaken.

Panjani, Ghungroo – These are usually made of bell metal with iron pellets. When the pellets are rattled inside the cavity they produce sound. Panjanis and ghungroos are worn as ornaments by women. Many classical and folk dancers too wear ghungroos around the ankles.

Ghariyal – Heavier and larger than the Ghanta, it is used with prayers in temples.

Wood

The simplest and earliest of these were wooden sticks made of bamboo, wood or cane. In time they were modified and the Dandiya Vadya (popular to this day) was standardised with two coloured sticks, often with little bells on them for group dances seen today in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Katho, a long bamboo piece with a wooden bird or fish on top which strikes the bamboo to produce a beat is seen at the Baisakhi festival in Punjab (See Festivals).

Tokka is used in folk dance and music in Assam. It is a metre of slit bamboo, which is held in the right hand and rattled.

Patari Danda is used in place of tal vadyas (beat instruments) like Tabla, Mridangam and so on.

The Wooden Kartal is made of two parallel pieces, which, when struck against each other produce a beat. It is seen today in temples accompanying Bhajans. At times little round brass pieces are attached to the Kartal for additional melody.

String

BANAM

A primitive instrument mainly used by the Santhals of Bihar (See People: Tribes) as accompaniment to their singing. It is made of a single block of wood, hollowed, covered with parchment paper, the reverse side is beautifully carved, the single string is played with a steeply arched thin stick with a strand of horse hair.

CHIKARA

A popular tribal instrument of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It has a belly of a single block of hollow wood and a bamboo which serves as a finger board. The instrument has three strings, two of horse hair and one of steel. The bow is of fine cane with horse hair. It is used to accompany folk music and dance.

Kamancha is a similar instrument played by professional folk singers of western Rajasthan.

DILRUBA

A very clever combination of the Sitar and Sarangi, the Dilruba is played extensively in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. The instrument has four main and 11 sympathetic strings. The bow is in the right hand while the left plays over the strings. Dilruba today finds a regular place in modern Indian orchestra.

EKTARA

The oldest of string instruments. A gut is fixed on both sides of a bamboo piece, a metre long. Two wooden pieces are placed at either end to tighten the gut and the instrument is played with a stroke of the forefinger. Later modifications used a hollow pumpkin through which a round stick was passed and the string passed over a ridge resting on the pumpkin, covered with hide. The instrument is still popular with religious mendicants of certain tribes. Legends portray saint-composers like Meera, Surdas, Ravidas and Tulsidas carrying the Ektara with them on their wanderings (See Sages and Saints).

GOTUVADYAM

Essentially played in the south, it resembles the Veena without the frets. It has four main strings and three sympathetic strings that pass over a small bridge under the main bridge. All the strings are fastened at one end to seven screws.

GUIAR

An import from Spain, the Guitar came into the country to keep proper harmony and rhythm with 'modern' dance and music. It remains confined to light music.



A Chikara player

JAL TARANG

Introduced by the British, the Jal Tarang is a most intriguing instrument which has gained great popularity in India. It consists of 7 to 11 cups of varying sizes filled with water; the bigger ones produce the lower octaves while the smaller, the upper octaves. It is placed in a semi-circle and played with two sticks which are struck on the cups to produce the sweetest of notes.

RABAB

The Rabab, it is said, originated in West Asia and was played for the first time in India by the immortal singer Tansen (See Tansen) in the court of Akbar. The Rabab has a double belly, the first covered with parchment and the second with wood. Generally there are four strings to it, but six-stringed ones are not uncommon.

RAVANA HATTA

According to Hindu mythology, Ravana, a great musician (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Ramayana), is said to have invented the instrument which bears his name – Ravanahatta. It consists of a long bamboo, 72 cm in length, with a coconut shell for a body. The main playing string is of horse-hair and the other two are metal, twisted



Sitar maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar

into one. The bow is made of curved wood with bells attached to it. This folk instrument is still popular in rural Rajasthan.

SANTOOR

An instrument of the Kashmir Valley, its western counterpart is the Dulcimer. It had its origins in the 100 stringed Shatatantri Veena. Today the Santoor has 60 to 100 strings and is made of a wooden trapezium-shaped box. The player uses two curved sticks held in either hand to strike at the strings. It is very much in demand by film musicians.

SARANGI

A popular folk instrument for centuries, the Sarangi has adapted itself to classical music. The modern Sarangi has 30 to 40 sympathetic strings which run under the three main strings. The voice of the Sarangi comes close to human vocal chords and vocalists find it a most satisfactory accompaniment.

SARINDA

The Langa community of Rajasthan uses this primitive instrument. It has three main strings, two of steel and one gut, tied in an elliptical track to pegs on top. It has six sympathetic strings called jeel and jhara. Notes here are played with fingertips while the tune is played with a bow of horsehair.

SAROD

It has a short but deep body, bucket-shaped, which acts as resonator and the lower part, like the Rabab, is covered with parchment while the upper finger-board has a plate of burnished steel but no frets. It has seven principal strings and as many as 15 resonant strings.

SITAR

The Sitar is an improved form of a Veena, although it is not very certain when the Sitar was first introduced. There is reason to believe that Amir Khusro, a courtier of Ala-ud-din Khilji (See History; Sages and Saints), first brought it to notice in the 14th century. The modern Sitar has three varieties. The single Sitar, with seven strings only on the top is ideal for beginners. The double Sitar has seven strings on the upper part and 11 additional sympathetic strings. The doublegourd Sitar has all the attributes of the double Sitar and in addition has a gourd fixed at the back of the finger-board top for resonating sound.

TANPURA

A popular accompanying instrument all over India, it was brought in from West Asia during the later Mughal period and today provides the ideal drone for the vocalist. Tanpuras are made of jackwood or hol-



S. Balachander on the celestial Veena

lowed-out gourd. The belly is convex-shaped and the bridge is of wood or ivory. The four wires are stretched to give the most accurate pitch required for the singer.

TANT

The word meaning 'vein' is used now for string instruments in general like the Sitar and Veena. A string instrumentalist is known as tantkaria.

TAUS

Lit. Peacock (Persian). The lower part of the instrument resembles a peacock. But for this the Taus is similar to the Dilruba.

Israj also belongs to the Dilruba family, only the fingerboard is narrower and the body is rounder with a shallow middle. These differences give the Israj a softer and more melodious tone.

VEENA

The word Veena was first used in association with the *Vedas*. During an Aswamedha Yajna (See Religion: Hinduism – Ceremonies and Rituals) the rishis used the instrument while chanting mantras. The Veena is the instrument of Saraswati (the goddess of learning and fine arts). The Maha Veena is said to be the invention of Narada Muni and today it is essentially a classical instrument. It has four strings and is played held over the left shoulder of the player sitting cross-legged. Mostly popular as a south Indian classical instrument.

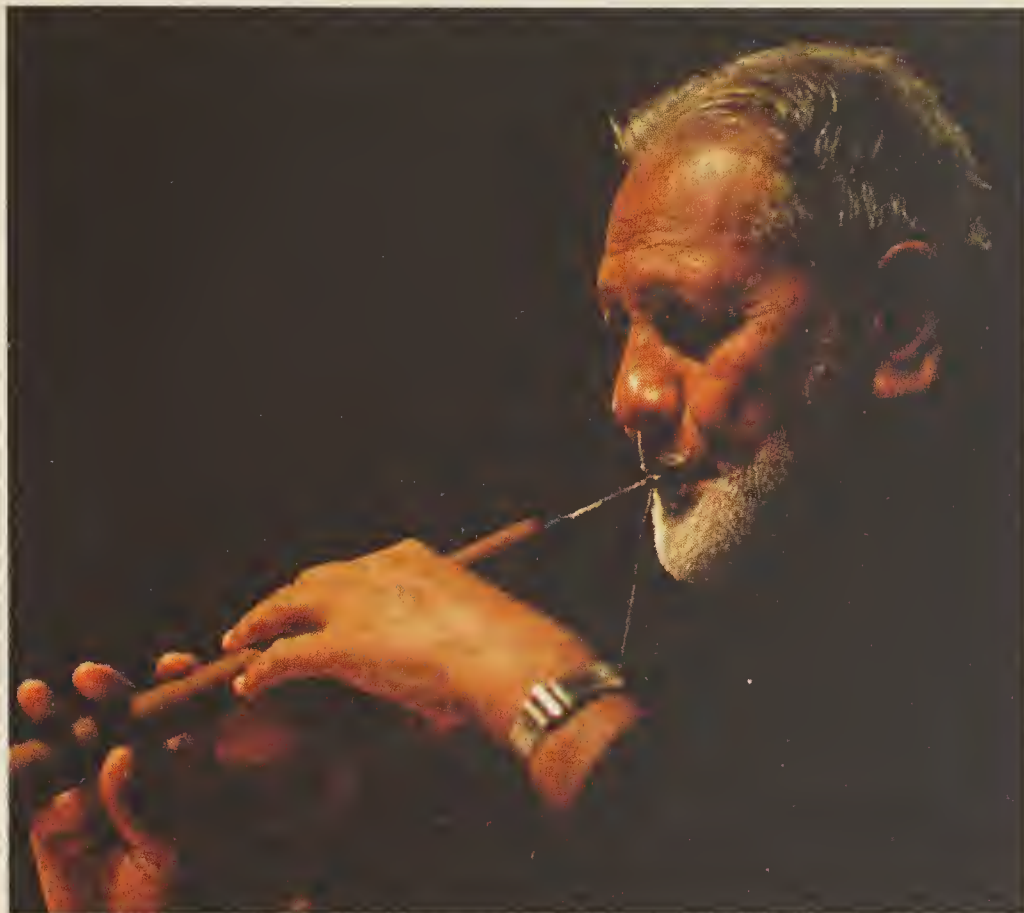
The Kinnari (said to have been invented by Kinnari, a celestial musician) and Mahti Veena were the primitive varieties developed during the later Muslim period. The southern Veena consists of a large body of jackwood. The neck is attached to the stem. The gourd is fixed under the neck and forms a support for the instrument. Seven strings (of which the four main ones pass over the fret) are attached to the pegs on the neck; the other three are used for rhythm.

The Vichitra Veena is of recent origin and still popular in north India and resembles the southern Veena.

The Kattayana Veena derives its name from the inventor, the divine sage of the name and is also called Shatatantary – 100-stringed.

VIOLIN

This sophisticated instrument of western Chamber Music was introduced to the royal courts of India by the British and in time the small melodious Violin was completely absorbed into Indian classical music. Its long, continuous notes made it an ideal vocal accompaniment and it also gained equal popularity as a solo instrument.



Bismillah Khan on the Shehnai

Wind

The wind or aerophonic instruments are those played with the pressure of air from the mouth into a pipe. In primitive times man tried to produce music by holding his hand in a conical shape and blowing air through it. He then used a piece of bamboo for blowing air and thus developed the Murali, Bansuri, Alguzha and so on.

ALGUZHA

What differentiates the Alguzha from the flute is that it is most often played in pairs, with the player blowing into both cylinders simultaneously. It is played in accompaniment to Punjabi folk songs and is used a great deal by the Meos of the Alwar district of Rajasthan and some parts of Andhra Pradesh. The size of the Alguzha differs from place to place.

BUFFALO HORN

Called Singh or Singha in the north and Kombu (Horn) in the south while some states refer to it as Narasingha, the horn is the oldest musical instrument. Even today it is popular with tribal and folk music. The buffalo horn is called Visan and deer horn, Singhi. The trumpet, made from a human thigh bone was also an important primitive instrument. It originated in Bhutan long before the advent of Buddhism. It was used as a whistle by hunters.

FIFLI

An instrument of north-east India, it is made of a bamboo pipe with one end closed and the other open. The opening is placed below the lower lip vertically and very simple tunes are played.

FLUTE

Called by various names, Murali, Bansuri, Vanshi, Venu, the Flute is also an ancient instrument dating back to the Vedic period and a favourite of Krishna (Murali Manohar). It is made of bamboo pipe with six holes for finger movements and a bigger one for the player to blow through. It is said to reproduce the human voice most closely.

HARMONIUM

One of the most common and popular accompanying instruments, it was brought to India by the Europeans along with the Piano, Organ and Violin. The keys of the Harmonium are so versatile that they need no tuning and can be set to the pitch of any singer. The instrument today can be heard everywhere, be it in the homes of mendicants or the richest of patrons.

NAGASWARAM

A most auspicious instrument of the south, no ceremony or temple puja is complete without the playing of the Nagaswaram (Nadaswaram). It is called 'mangala vadya'

or auspicious instrument for this reason. The Nagaswaram is 75 cm in length and has an enlarged bottom. It has seven fingerholes and five others at the bottom to serve as controllers.

PEPA

Used in Assam to accompany dance and music, the Pepa is made of two small horns each with conical metal bells and two cylindrical bamboo pipes of equal length. There are three fingerholes on one and four on the other. The reeds are placed directly in the mouth and metal loops are inserted on the two horns.

PUNGI

Also called the Snake Been, the Pungi belongs to the Flute category and is used by snake charmers to coax snakes out of their dwelling holes. The Pungi has an oval gourd with small holes at the neck. Two thin bamboos with even holes are attached to the centre of the gourd. Two human hair strands are inserted into the pipes and stuck down with wax.

SHANKHA

The conch or shankha is a most sacred and natural instrument. It is an attribute of Vishnu and the Panchajanya Shankha was blown during the Kurukshetra war by Krishna while the Devdatta was blown by Arjuna. The Shankha also held an important place in Buddhism and is represented in the sculptures of Sanchi and Amaravati. The Valambheri Shankha of the south is spiral in shape and has a distinct right-hand twist. In Bengal and in parts of eastern India, the blowing of the conch marks the start of a morning or evening puja even in homes.

SHEHNAI

Like the Nagaswaram of the south the Shehnai is the 'mangal vadya' or auspicious instrument of the north. There is an interesting story about the origin of its name. Originally called Nai, it was played at the old Egyptian tombs. When a Nai player played before the king of Persia with great expertise, the king was so pleased he called the instrument Shehnai or the 'Nai of the Shah' or king. The Shehnai is accompanied by a Shruti Shehnai which produces the same continuous sound required by the basic note of the Shehnai.

PUPPETRY

In the Indus Valley excavation (See History) some interesting toys were found which could be manipulated with the help of strings. There are also references to puppets in epics like the Mahabharata (where a human being is likened to a puppet whose strings are in the hands of Fate).

The old Buddhist work Therigatha mentions string and shadow puppets.

The name of the stock character of Sanskrit theatre, Sutradhar, literally means string holder (of puppets). This has led some scholars to believe that Sanskrit drama originated from puppet theatre. A group of Sanskrit plays, Chhaya Nataka, are supposed to be the texts used for puppet plays. Some Sanskrit plays include both puppets and actors according to the Kama Sutra (See Literature).

All four types of puppets – string, shadow, glove and rod, are still popular in the country. Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are some of the strongholds of traditional puppetry, reflecting regional styles of dance, music, painting and folklore (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

BOMMALATTAM

These puppets from Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, combine the techniques of both rod and string puppets. They are made of wood and the strings for manipulation are tied to an iron ring which the puppeteer wears like a crown on his head. Some of the puppets have jointed arms and legs which are moved by rods. The Bommalattam puppets are large, heavy and the most articulate of all traditional Indian marionettes.

GLOVE PUPPETS

Indian glove puppets – and string puppets – share a hoary span of existence. The glove puppet is worn over the hand and manipulated with the puppeteer's forefingers. Glove puppets are popular in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa and Kerala. In UP they enact popular legends based on Radha and Krishna and in Kerala glove



Rajasthani puppet theatre

puppet shows are similar to the Rajasthani Kathputli theatre in dress and music.

GOMBEYATTA

These are the string puppets of Karnataka, styled and designed like the characters of the Yakshagana, the traditional theatre of the region, and are usually based on Yakshagana plays called *Prasangas*. These puppets are highly stylised and have joints at the legs, shoulders and elbows, hips and knees. The puppets are manipulated by five to seven strings tied to a prop. Some of the more complicated movements are handled by more than one puppeteer.

KATHPUTLI

These are the traditional marionettes of Rajasthan: large dolls carved from a single piece of wood. Their attire and headgear are designed in the medieval Rajasthani style. The Kathputli dance is accompanied by a dramatised version of Rajasthani regional folk music. Round faces, large eyes, arched eyebrows and large lips are some of the characteristic features of the Kathputli. The puppets wear long trailing skirts and are moved by two to five strings.

KUNDHEI

String puppets of Orissa, made of light wood, they wear long, trailing skirts and have no legs. They are made up of a number of joints and are easy to manipulate, with strings tied to a triangular wooden prop. The costumes of the Kundhei are akin to that of Jatra folk theatre. The music is folk with a hint of the Odissi dance.

ROD PUPPETS

An extended form of the glove puppets, rod puppets are popular in West Bengal and Orissa. The traditional rod puppet of West Bengal is known as Putul Nautch. The puppeteer here ties a bamboo hub around

his waist on which he places the supporting rod of the puppet. The hands of the puppet are controlled by thin wires and every movement of the puppeteer is reflected in the puppet. On account of the style of manipulation, the puppets appear realistic. The Putul Nautch is accompanied by prose dialogues delivered by puppeteers themselves. The rod puppets of Orissa are more operatic and seldom have prose dialogues.

SHADOW THEATRE

Believed to be the oldest form of puppetry. Flat forms are cut out of leather and lightly pressed on a translucent screen with a strong source of light behind it. The tradition of shadow puppets may still be seen in Orissa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The shadow theatre in Orissa is called Ravan-chhaya. The puppets are made of deer skin and are very small in size. In Kerala this theatre is called Tholapavakuthu, and is usually staged in temples as serialised puppet shows. These puppets, like the Ravan-chhaya puppets, are opaque and throw black and white shadows on the screen. Tholubommalatta is the shadow theatre of Andhra Pradesh. These are large puppets with joints at the waist, neck, shoulders, elbows and knees. They are made of leather and rendered translucent by an indigenous process and are then coloured with vegetable dyes. They throw up coloured shadows on the screen. The shadow theatre of Karnataka uses comparatively smaller puppets and is known as Togalu Gombeyatta. Tholapavakuthu, Tholubommalatta and Togalu Gombeyatta all literally mean 'leather doll play.'

THEATRE

ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALAM

A popular saying goes, "Of all the forms of literature, drama is the best, and of all dramas, *Shakuntala*." Kalidasa's immortal play, became popular long ago and travelled across the frontiers of India to be translated and staged in many countries of the world (See Literature: Sanskrit). The play depicts, in seven acts, the fury and passion of love, the pathos of betrayal and separation and the joy of reunion.

AMPHITHEATRE

Around 1952, a quadrangular amphitheatre, 18 m x 15 m, was excavated by archaeologists at Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh. The only one of its kind in India, it is thought to have been built in the 3rd century AD under Ikshvaku rule (See History). Considering the Greco-Roman trade links this region had, some scholars feel that Yavanas who came to western India in the first few centuries of the Christian era and many of whom were converted to Buddhism might have designed this structure. Since Nagarjunakonda was a great centre of Buddhist culture, it is possible that plays based on Buddhist themes may have been enacted here.

ANKIA NAT

Assamese one-act plays based on Vaishnava mythology, particularly on the Krishna theme. The tradition of staging Ankia plays was started by Mahapurusha Shankaradeva (15th – 16th century) who apart from writing six plays also laid down the procedure for their performance. Singing, dancing and music dominate these plays.

Many disciples of Mahapurusha wrote Ankia plays. The staging of these plays on festive occasions became a regular practice with the Assamese Vaishnava monasteries known as *satra* (chhatra). The monks or bhaktas living in the *satras* stage Ankia plays to this day.

ASVAGHOSA

The first known Buddhist playwright and poet, Asvaghosa belongs to 1st century AD. His three plays were found in the surviving fragments of the palm leaf manuscripts. One of these, *Shariputra Prakarana* tells the story of the conversion of Shariputra and Maudagalyayana by Buddha. Of the two other plays, whose titles are missing, one is an allegorical drama.

Apart from these plays, he is also known for two other works – *Buddhacharita*, a poetic biography of Buddha and *Sundarananda* an account of Buddha's younger brother Nanda. Other works by him include *Vajrasuchi*, *Mahayana*

and *Kalpanamanditika* (See Religion: Buddhism).

BAHURUPI

Bahu means 'many' and rupa, 'forms,' hence an actor who entertains his audiences by assuming different roles, be it a Puranic deity or an animal. Each region in India has its own Bahurupi tradition enacted by nomadic actors.

BHAGAT

Bhagat is best described as a semi-religious, folk, musical dance drama of Himachal Pradesh, performed around a bonfire. After an initial ritual of worship and prayers, episodes from Krishna's childhood are enacted. A series of small interesting plays based on different themes are then presented, often glorifying local deities with the jester Maskara playing key roles.

In Agra, Mathura, Brindavan and Hathras there is another tradition of Bhagat plays based on religion and mythology. A Bhagat play could be enacted for a number of days. Unlike other folk plays, the Bhagat plays here are written down and the text strictly followed. Seldom is a play repeated. This tradition differs from the Himachali tradition in form, content and presentation techniques.

BHARATA MUNI

Practically nothing authentic is known about this great author of an encyclopaedic work on dramaturgy, *Natya Shastra*. He is generally placed between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD. In his work he has mentioned a number of authors on dramaturgy who were his contemporaries or wrote before him (See Dance).

BHASA

One of the great Sanskrit dramatists, Bhasa is poetically described as a beautiful smile on the lips of the muse. Though he was frequently mentioned by the later poets including Kalidasa, his 13 plays were discovered only in the first decade of this century in Kerala.

Almost nothing authentic is known about the life of this great dramatist. He is placed in the 4th century BC and his patron king, Rajasimha, whom he frequently mentions in his plays is identified with Chandragupta Maurya.

His plays based on the *Ramayana* are *Pratima* and *Abhishekha*. Themes from the *Mahabharata* are explored in *Balacharita*, *Pancharatra*, *Madyama Vya-yoga*, *Duta Vakya*, *Urubhanga*, *Karnabhar* and *Duta Ghatotkacha*. Plays based on stories of King Udayana are *Swapna Vasavdatta* and *Pratijnya Yaugandha-*

rayana. Other romantic plays include *Arimaraka* and *Daridra Charudatta*.

It is said that when Bhasa's plays were put to an ordeal by fire, the flames could not burn his play, *Swapna Vasavdatta*, hence the name, Agnimitra.

Bhasa is credited with writing the only tragedy in Sanskrit dramatic literature – *Urubhanga*.

Even today Bhasa's plays are enacted in the temple theatres of Kerala by the Chakyar actors.

BHASAN YATRA

A folk dramatic form of Bengal, Bhasan Yatra is based on the popular story of serpent goddess Manasa whose anger inflicts calamities on a merchant named Chand, but is calmed by the maiden Behula. This story with a happy ending is enacted with song, dance and music during the monsoon month of Shravana.

BHAVABHUTI

A writer of highly poetic and lyrical plays, Bhavabhuti (8th century) was born as Shrikantha or Nilakantha in the Vidarbha region of present day Maharashtra. He wrote three plays, of which *Mahaveeracharita* and *Uttara Rama Charita* were based on the story of Rama and *Malati Madhava*, a romantic comedy of his own creation. The stock character of Sanskrit dramatic literature, Vidushaka or jester is absent from his plays. In *Malati Madhava* there is a terrible scene depicting tantrik rituals (See Religion: Hinduism – Tantra) and human sacrifice set in the gory atmosphere of a crematorium. This scene is the only of its kind in Sanskrit dramatic literature. In his play *Uttara Rama Charita* he resorts to the technique of 'drama within drama.'

BHAVAI

Music and dance oriented, folk, dramatic form of Gujarat. Created in the late 14th century by Asait the 'patit' (outcast) Brahmin. Bhavai is enacted in a circular stage area. The performers sing and act as part of the chorus and do not exit during the play.

Rajasthan too has performances known as Bhavai. They feature small, dramatic skits, acrobatic feats and magic shows.

BURRAKATHA

Traditional semi-dramatic narrative form popular in Andhra Pradesh. A group of three performers in long robes, colourful turbans and bells on their feet narrate mythological, historical or socio-political stories through singing, dancing and dramatics. The chief narrator, Kathakudu, holds a tambura (See Musical Instruments)



A Kudiyattam dancer

in one hand and wears a hollow ring with metal bells inside on his right thumb. On his right side stands a performer known as Rajakiya who is well versed in contemporary affairs and on the left yet another performer known as Hasyam who provides comic relief. Both of them play on the drums while the Kathakudu recites the story in a dramatic manner. It is believed that this form was initially evolved by women in the 15th century.

CENSORSHIP

First known to be introduced on the advice of the statesman Kautilya in the Maurya empire around 4th century BC (See History). Kautilya lays down the rule that actors may perform at any place in the country and entertain the people but they must desist from making fun of country, caste, family, a certain school of Vedic study and sex.

CHANDI YATRA

Plays based on the Chandi aspect of the mother goddess popular in Bengal (See Religion: Hinduism). Her myth is embodied in the medieval Bengali narrative poem, *Chandi Mangal*. Chandi yatra plays are enacted in rural Bengal in October during the Durga Puja festival (See Festivals).

CHHAU

Chhau dance dramas are found in three eastern states in India. Accordingly they are known as Mayurbhanj Chhau (Orissa), Purulia Chhau (West Bengal) and Seraikella Chhau (Bihar). The performers of Mayurbhanj Chhau alone do not wear masks (See Dance).

The Seraikella Chhau form part of the Chaitra Parva festival (See Festivals). While most of the themes are from myths and everyday life, the tragic story of Chandrabhaga and the Sun god is most popular. In Mayurbhanj too, Chhau is performed during the Chaitra festival and the subjects are varied.

The Purulia Chhau is basically mythology and ritual oriented, assimilating folk and tribal styles. Here villains are vanquished and gods triumph in fierce battles. The most popular theme is Durga killing the demon Mahisasura (See Festivals: Hindu – Dussehra). The masks are most impressive, particularly that of ten-headed Ravana.

Though Chhau has a variety of themes there is no literal text of performance. Enacted to the beat of various musical instruments the performance is mute but expressively effective to convey the central theme.

CHITRAKATHI

The community of picture showmen set-



Purulia Chhau

tled in Pinguli village of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. A Chitrakathi sits on the ground, keeps before him the manuscript or pothi of paintings and narrates mythological stories through verse and prose to the accompaniment of musical instruments. While telling the story he picks up a painting relevant to his narration from his manuscript and shows it to his spectators. Chitrakathi paintings were found at Paithan which is also known for its fine sari tradition (See Visual Arts: Design – Textiles). Chitrakathi artists are now confined to Pinguli, having forsaken their itinerant shows in recent years. They also stage shows with shadow and string puppets during temple festivals (See Puppetry).

DASHAVATARA

According to Hindu scriptures Lord Vishnu appears on earth in various incarnations to destroy evil, protect the good, and restore dharma and peace on earth (See Religion: Hinduism – Vishnu).

The Dashavatara or ten incarnations of Vishnu are found sculpted on the walls of temples all over India. A Vishnu temple at Deogarh is known as Dashavatara temple and one of the caves at Ellora is known as Dashavatara cave. There are Dashavatara playing cards also (See Visual Arts: Painting and Sculpture).

Dashavatara is also a name of a dramatic form, full of singing, dancing and music, particularly popular in the Goman-taka and Konkan regions of Goa-Maharashtra. Initially it must have come into vogue to present a dramatic version of the mythological stories related to the incarnations. However, the mythological story of the Matsya or fish incarnation gained importance, and its dramatic representation became the main theme of the Dashavatara drama.

In the play, *Sankasur* – a character who is both a villain and a jester, steals the *Vedas* and Lord Vishnu kills him to recover the holy books.

In Gomantaka, these plays are enacted in the temple sabhagrihas.

Interestingly enough the Yakshagana of Karnataka was also known as *Dashavatara Atta* or the drama of ten incarnations.

HARSHAVARDHANA

Harshavardhana, ruler of Kanauj during the 7th century is said to have authored the Sanskrit plays *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarshika* and *Nagananda* (See Literature: Sanskrit).

Ratnavali, the most famous of his plays, is the love story of King Udayana and princess Ratnavali. In the first act of the play there is a very lively description of the celebration of Vasantotsava (spring

festival) full of dancing, singing, music and humour. This particular portion of the play was very popular with the courtesans of Varanasi who used to enact it to amuse their more important guests.

His play *Nagananda*, based on a Buddhist theme used to be performed in the Buddhist monasteries of Mathura.

GAMBHIRA

Ritualistic masked dance of north Bengal based on mythological themes and performed during the annual April Sun Festival. Heavy wooden masks are worn and the performers, dancing to loud drum beats, are sometimes 'possessed' by the spirit of the deity whose mask is worn. The dances are to ensure good rains and plentiful harvest.

GONDHAL

In Maharashtra, as an adjunct to particular rituals or functions there is a practice of arranging the Gondhal performance. In the Gondhal group of four performers, two are musicians, one the chief narrator, called Naik and one his assistant. After the ritual worship the Naik starts his performance by singing prayers in honour of Ganesha and other deities and invites them to grace the performance. After this he begins his dramatic narration. He makes use of all kinds of folk literature to embellish his narrative, lacing it with songs and mono-acting. A number of folk literary forms owe their survival to the continuing Gondhal tradition.

JATRA

The most popular and flourishing form of theatrical entertainment in Bengal, Jatra had its origin in Vaishnava musical plays based on the Krishna theme introduced in Bengal by the 16th century saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (See Sages and Saints). Gradually it enlarged its thematic base and adopted many new formats including historical, social and political themes. The performance is marked by loud and dramatic acting, high-pitch dialogue delivery, an abundance of dancing and singing, glittering costumes and rich music. Jatra is equally popular in rural and urban areas of Bengal.

KALA

Part of the Gomantaka musical plays of Goa that are based on the Krishnalila theme (episodes from Krishna's life) are known as Kala of which there are three kinds – *Gopal Kala*, *Gaulan Kala* and *Balakrida Kala*. The *Gopal Kala* is performed early in the morning. Two teams – one led by Krishna and Balarama and the other by the demon Pralambhasura – stand before each other and play a game of riddles. In the end there

ensues a great fight in which the demon is killed.

The *Gaulan Kala* noted for its high musical content enacts the lilas of Krishna and is presented in the afternoon.

Balakrida Kala is staged at night. In this a number of mythological characters appear on the stage and a story (Akhyana; See Myths and Legends) is enacted. The performance ends with the enactment of the story of Matsyavatara (the fish incarnation of Vishnu; See Religion: Hinduism). The local temple is generally the venue of Kala performances.

KALIDASA

Revered as Kavi-kula-guru or the greatest among the clan of poets, very little is known about the life and times of Kalidasa. He is placed between 1st and 6th century AD and is believed to be a contemporary of either Chandragupta Vikramaditya or Raja Bhoja of Dhara.

The story goes that an illiterate orphan, by a strange twist of fate, was married to a learned princess who rebuked him for his rustic ways. The dejected boy surrendered himself to goddess Kali by whose blessings he blossomed into a fine poet – Kalidasa.

He was grateful to his wife but at the same time began to revert to his wayward life. He gained great fame but was killed by a greedy courtesan in her house in Sri Lanka.

His reputation as a great dramatist rests on his three plays – *Vikramorvashtyam*, *Malavikagnimitra* and *Abhijnana Shaktuntalam*. His four poetic works are *Ritusambara*, *Kumarasambhavam*, *Meghadoota* and *Raghuvamsa*.

Kalidasa excels in the depiction of Shringara rasa (romantic and erotic sentiments) and is known for his mastery over simile (Upama Kalidasaya). He ranks amongst the world's best litterateurs (See Literature: Sanskrit).

KARIYALA

Kariyala is an open air musical, folk dance drama of Himachal Pradesh. In the centre of the rectangular performing arena, a bonfire is lit and the performance begins with the dance of Chandravali, one of the characters. This is followed by 'Sadhu Ka Swarg' where actors in the guise of sadhus converse in a humorous and philosophic vein. After this several small farces are enacted. Folk songs and dance are presented alongside. Kariyalas are known for their scathing social criticism.

KHYAL

Khyal is a popular folk theatre form of

Rajasthan. Initially Khyal was a folk poetic composition which in due course of time evolved itself into a musical dramatic form full of singing, dancing and play acting. Khyal took different forms in different regions of Rajasthan, however retaining its basic musical operatic form. Plays based on historical, social and religious themes are enacted on Khyal stage but the stress is always on music. Different types of stage structures have been evolved to present different types of Khyal plays. Sometimes a multi-tiered stage rising to 6 m is erected, reflecting many features of Rajasthani architecture, adding grandeur to drama.

KRISHNATTAM

In 1654, Manaveda, the zamorin of Calicut, composed an epic poem, *Krishnageeti* in honour of the Guruvayoor deity (See Holy Places). Krishnattam, the ritualistic dance drama is based on Manaveda's composition. Performed over eight consecutive nights, the drama traces Krishna's story from birth to ascent to heaven. The actors wear colourful costumes and makeup. The eight plays which constitute Krishnattam are titled – *Avataram* (incarnation of Lord Krishna), *Kaliyamardanam* (subduing of serpent Kalia), *Rasakrida* (Ras dance), *Swayamvaram* (wedding of Krishna), *Kamsavadham* (killing of Kansa), *Banayuddham* (encounter with Bana the demon), *Vividha Vadham* (killing of Vividha) and *Swargarohanam* (ascent to heaven). The actors perform to the chant of a chorus of singers and musicians who stand in the background. Some characters like Yama, Kalan, and Brahma appear in masks. There is a Krishnattam troupe attached exclusively to the Guruvayoor temple (See Dance; Holy Places: Temples).

KUDIYATTAM

The Kerala tradition of staging Sanskrit plays in the temple precincts by actors of Chakyar and actresses of Nambiar communities is known as Kudiattam (See Dance). It is a very old tradition in which the 9th century king and dramatist Kulasekhara Varman introduced innovations. While plays by Harsha, Shaktibhadra, Mahendravikrama and Nilakantha were popular on the Kudiattam stage, it was Bhasa's plays that dominated. Only a single act of the play is selected for enactment at a time because of the elaborate production involved. It is staged over several days. An actor may take hours to act out a single verse. Chakyars have prepared detailed production (*karamdipika*) and acting (*attaprakaram*) manuals for the purpose. Special theatre halls (*Kuttambalam*) have been constructed in temple precincts for these plays.

KUMMATTIKALI

Kummattikali, a masked dance of the Trichur district of Kerala is performed during the festival season of Onam. Donning attractive masks symbolising Shiva, his attendant Bhuta Ganas, Mahabali, Ganapati, Hanumana, Darika or of real life characters, the young boys move in a procession, singing. At some places such as Urakam, the Kummattikali procession signifies a ceremonial farewell to King Mahabali, who it is believed, returns to the lower world after visiting his old kingdom on earth, on the 4th day of Onam (See Festivals: Hindu).

At Bhadrakali temple in Puthusseri in Palghat district, Kummatti masked performance takes the form of temple ritual. In these performances people do not wear but carry their wooden masks in their hands.

KUTTAMBALAM

Lit. play temple. In the premises of some temples in Kerala, permanent theatre buildings, known as Kuttambalam are constructed to present Kuttu and Kudiattam performances. Generally rectangular in shape they mostly follow the plan of theatre building given in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*. The inner space of the Kuttambalam is broadly divided into auditorium, stage proper for dramatic performance and the makeup room just behind it. The stage has a roof over it supported by ornate pillars. Its ceiling of wood is beautifully carved all over. These theatre halls are known for their perfect acoustics, are found at Vadakunatha temple at Trichur and at Bharata temple at Irinjalakuda.

KUSANE

Derived from *Kushilava*, a ballad singer who sings of Sita's sons, Lava and Kusha. The chief singer strums a primitive stringed musical instrument called Bena hence this form is also known as Bena Kusane. All the performers sit on the stage and get up to act when their turn comes. Kusane is a verse play with occasional prose dialogues thrown in with the more harrowing moments of the story as its highlights.

MACHA

Derived from the term 'Manch' which means the stage. As a musical dance-drama of immense charm, Macha evolved in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh, based on mythological, historical and social themes, with particular emphasis on singing melodious songs in folk as well as in classical tunes.

MANKHA

A community of ballad singers of ancient India who used to illustrate their narrative

by showing painted scrolls and picture panels with stories depicted on them. This tradition has survived under different names in different regions of the country. Some prominent performers of the Mankha tradition are Chitrakathis of Maharashtra, Bhopa Phad of Rajasthan, Garodas of Gujarat and Jadu Patuas of West Bengal and Bihar. There is also a strong tradition of picture showmen in Andhra Pradesh.

MASK

A most ancient theatrical device, mesolithic dancers painted on the walls of caves may be seen using various masks. Hollowed clay masks were found at Mohenjodaro. An actor's terracotta mask ascribed to 3rd – 4th century BC was found at Chirand. In his *Natya Shastra*, Bharata has elaborated on theatrical masks. The material for masks varies from place to place. Wood, metal, bamboo, clay, papier mache, cloth, cork, pith, hide, tapestry and bark are all used to make masks. Gold-edged and embroidered zari masks are popular in theatrical forms like Ramlila. In the theatrical forms of the Himalayan region and the Chhau dance dramas of eastern India, all the participants are masked whereas in Ankiya Nat, Krishnattam and Ramlila a few of the performers don masks. Sahi Jatra, the street theatre of Puri, Orissa, makes use of huge, full-length masks.

MRICHHAKATIKA

Considered one of the gems of Sanskrit dramatic literature *Mrichhakatika* (*Little Clay Cart*) is a romantic comedy in ten acts written by King Sudraka in the 3rd century AD. Based on Bhasa's earlier play *Daridra Charudatta*, this play depicts a love story of a poor and handsome Brahmin youth Charudatta and a rich and lovely courtesan, Vasantasena of the city of Ujjain. A subplot, by rebel Aryaka to overthrow King Palaka is woven in skilfully. Sudraka has effectively portrayed characters from the different strata of contemporary society.

MUDIYETTU

A ritual dance drama performed as a part of Bhadrakali temple festival of Kerala. The central theme of the play is the triumph of the goddess over the demon Darika.

Before the actual commencement of the performance a large drawing of the goddess Bhadrakali (an aspect of Devi, See Religion: Hinduism) is drawn on the floor with coloured powder. Worship is offered, the drawing is erased and the powder is distributed as prasada.

In the opening scene, Lord Shiva appears and is informed by the sage Narada of Darika's misdeeds. In the next scene

the demon presents himself in full fury and is challenged by the goddess. A terrible fight ensues in which Darika is killed along with another demon, Danavendra.

The first performance is held in the Kalambukavu temple in the Ernakulam district of Kerala and is followed by many others at other Bhadrakali temples. The festive season lasts from November to May.

Mudiyettu is offered to goddess Bhadrakali as a measure against various epidemics like small pox and for the general welfare of the people.

MUDRARAKSHASA

Written by the poet Vishakhadatta in the 6th century AD *Mudrarakshasa* is a grand play in seven acts on a political theme. It tells of how Chanakya, the wily Mauryan minister, converts Rakshasa, an opponent, into an ally of Chandragupta Maurya. Full of political intrigue, moves and countermoves, the play does not have the usual stock characters like a heroine or Vidushaka the jester nor the romantic atmosphere that pervades Sanskrit dramatic literature. The play, the only one of its kind, throws light on the political history of the Mauryan empire and for the first time gives some information about Chanakya the author of *Arthashastra* (See History: Dynasties).

MUKHA KHEL

Lit. masked play, masked dance drama based on the *Ramayana*, in the Jalpaiguri district of north Bengal, using big wooden masks in the Tibetan style.

NAANDI

Prayer songs sung in honour of various deities before the start of the play. Most Naandi songs in Sanskrit plays are in praise of Shiva who is looked upon as a presiding deity of dramatic art.

NATA

A term applied to performance. The word appears for the first time in the *Astadhyayi* of Panini written in the 7th century BC. Lord Shiva is known as Nataraja (See Dance – Bharata Natyam).

NATA MANDIR

Nata Mandir, mandap or navaranga is a special hall where a traditional offering of dance, music and drama is made to the presiding deity. The Nata Mandir of the Sun temple at Konarak, the dancing hall in the Jagannatha temple at Puri, Navaranga at Chennakeshava mandir at Belur are some of the famous examples of temple theatres.

NATA SUTRA

The first known text book for actors, *Nata Sutra*, written by Shilalin and Krishasva is

mentioned by Panini in his work on grammar, *Ashtadhyayi*, written in the 7th century BC. The work is lost to posterity.

NATYA SHASTRA

An encyclopaedic work on dramaturgy written by Bharata Muni said to be composed sometime between 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD. Traditionally it is considered to be a work containing 36 chapters and 6,000 verses, apart from some prose passages. It gives the history of theatre and covers numerous theatre-related topics such as the construction of the playhouse, the procedure of presentation of dramatic performance, choreography, music, costumes and make-up, classifications of play and analysis of their structure, story and dramatic characters, the fourfold division of acting, criticism of dramatic performance among others. The major theory of Indian aesthetics, the *Rasa Siddhanta*, appears in this work for the first time. The *Natya Shastra*, since its inception remains the guide book of Indian performing artistes (See Dance – Bharata Muni).

NAUTANKI

Musical folk drama of north India, it came into vogue at the end of 19th century taking elements from earlier forms of musical entertainment prevalent in the region. A verse play of this genre, *Shahzadi Nautanki*, became so famous that the genre itself came to be known as Nautanki. Hathras and Kanpur emerged as major centres of the art. Initially only male actors used to present Nautanki but gradually women dancers and singers too joined in. Nautanki was started as a verse play but under the influence of urban theatre, prose dialogues too were added. Songs and dances performed to the shrill beat of the Nakkara drum are Nautanki's forte.

Though Nautanki's take on mythological, historical and even contemporary socio-political themes for enactment it is the comic and erotic elements that hold great attraction for folk audiences. It is not uncommon to see Nautanki dancers at village fairs and at marriages.

OJA PALI

Assamese semi-dramatic narrative form, the Oja or leader of the group, is the chief narrator and the Palis are his assistants. They sing, dance, play on musical instruments and narrate stories either of the Suknani tradition (stories of the popular serpent goddess Manasa) or the Vyahgowa (Puranic and epic themes).

OTTAN THULLAL

(See Dance)

PABUJI KI PAD

Stories of folk heroes Devanarayana, Ramdev Ramdala, Kisundala and Bhavani are painted on a length of cloth called 'Pad.' These stories are narrated and sung by a folk singer, Bhopa, and his wife Bhopi as the Pad unfurls in the background. The story of Pabuji is particularly popular, hence *Pabuji ki Pad*.

PADAYANI

An ancient, ritualistic masked dance performed as a part of the Bhagvati temple festival of Kerala. It is said that even after killing the demon Darika the terrible anger of goddess Bhadrakali did not subside. To make her laugh, the gods made several multifaced masks of the goddess and her attendants and wearing those, danced before her.

To cure people possessed by evil spirits, a ritual used to be performed in which dancers wearing pictures painted on broad palm spathes danced around them to music and incantations. Some scholars believe this ritual to be the source of Padayani masked performances.

The pictures are drawn on the spathes of the arecanut palm tree and embellished with long tender leaves of the coconut tree. This is known as kolam (See Visual Arts: Design). Tying these kolams of varying sizes, on their bodies the dancers perform in the temple courtyard.

The kolams portray mythical and divine beings such as Bhairavi, Kalari or Shiva, Yakshis, and Gandharvas. some of which tend to be grotesque.

At some temples the Padayani festival lasts for several days with numerous rituals. In some temples, on the concluding day dancers with kolams of Gandharvas and Kala Yakshis walk on fire. The Kala Yakshi dance of the Kadalimangalam temple Padayani festival is particularly famous (See Mudiyettu).

PANDAVANI

A semi-dramatic narrative form evolved in the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh, Pandavani has the *Mahabharata* as its central theme. A Pandavani troupe has a chief narrator, man or woman and a couple of musicians to assist. He/she stands with a tanpura (See Musical Instruments) in hand and narrates a story, alternating verse with prose. During the course of narration he or she also performs roles of the characters in that episode. Apart from narrative skill, a Pandavani performer is expected to have some histrionic ability. One of the best known Pandavani performers is the fiery Teejan Bai.

POWADA

A tradition of Marathi composition which can be defined as song of praise or ballad prevalent since the time of Shivaji (See History). A Powada recitation is a semi-dramatic performance. The chief singer is known as Shahir and his narrative is in prose and verse. Powerful mono-acting is the soul of a Powada performance. During the course of his narration, the Shahir enacts in turn several roles of people mentioned in his narrative. He is assisted by a chorus of singers and musicians who sometimes take part in dramatic action.

PRAHLAD NATAKA

An open air folk dance drama form of Orissa, it depicts the story of the man-lion incarnation or Narasimha Avatar of Lord Vishnu (See Religion: Hinduism). Prahlad was a devotee of Lord Vishnu but his father, the demon Hiranyakashipu was the enemy of the Lord. To save Prahlad from his father, the Lord assumes the form of Narasimha or man-lion and kills the demon. A big throne rising tier above tier is made, effectively displaying dramatic action and demonic fury. The play unfolds through dancing, singing and music and ends in the death of the demon at the hands of Narasimha. This is the only theme of this folk form (See Festivals: Holi).

RAHAS

Rahas is a Chhatisgarhi version of the Raslila dance drama of the Braj region. It was during the 19th century that the influence of Raslila reached this tribal region of the Madhya Pradesh and under the impact of local theatrical traditions evolved into a very interesting dramatic form, acquiring religious and ritualistic overtones. For the enactment of Rahas whose theme is Krishna, a stage, sometimes a revolving one, is constructed in the village. Several terracotta images of deities of the Hindu pantheon are installed on the stage and in fact all over the village, thus turning the village into an abode of gods that is Brindavan or Brajmandal where Krishna is said to have performed his lilas. Lila plays like *Putana Vadha*, *Makhan Chori*, *Kalia Mardana*, and so on, are enacted night after night through dance and music. Between two lila plays a dance troupe known as Chalia, presents farcical plays called *Gammat*, an interesting amalgam of the religious and the secular.

Inspired by the Raslila, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah (See History) evolved dance dramas at Lucknow, which came to be known as Rahas. The Rahas of Lucknow was based on the Kathak dance tradition with a pleasing blend of classical and folk

music. This was essentially court drama, unlike the Chhatisgarhi Rahas which is a tribal performance.

RAMLILA

The popular theatre spectacle of north India, as a tradition began in the 17th century when the poet Tulsidas translated the *Ramayana* into Hindi (Avadhi to be exact). He dramatised certain portions of his *Ramcharitmanas* and presented them at Varanasi. Different areas of the city of Varanasi were named after places in the epic and Ramlila plays were enacted here over several nights. Taking their cue from the Ramayanis or singers, the child actors or Swarups, would enact the sung portion. Theatrical action came as a visual illustration of the recitation. The presentation would culminate on Dussehra with the burning of the effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meghanada (See Festivals: Dussehra). The next day would see the coronation celebration of Rama.

The most famous Ramlila of this genre is the one held in Ramnagar situated on the bank of the Ganga near Varanasi. Processions and tableaux depicting scenes from the epics are taken out.

SHAILUSHA

An actor of the Vedic age was known as Shailusha. Lord Shiva is referred to as Maha Shailusha or the great actor.

SUDRAKA

A great Sanskrit dramatist of 3rd century, Sudraka is best known for his play *Mrichhakatika*. According to a verse in the play, Sudraka was a great warrior king, well versed in various arts and sciences, who, after living for 110 years, ended his life through self-immolation. His real identity is not known. He was probably a south Indian king and author of the one-act play, *Padmaprabhritaka*.

SITABENGA CAVE THEATRE

The Sitabenga cave theatre in the Ramgarh hill in Madhya Pradesh dates back to 3rd century BC. Inscriptions in the cave indicate that it was a venue for the performing arts – poetry was recited, love songs were sung, and dramas staged. The nearby Jogimara cave bears an inscription that says that sculptor Devadinna loved a devadasi named Sutanuka.

SUTRADHAR

Literally the string-holder, the term, according to some scholars has come from the puppet theatre. However, according to some other scholars, it has come from the term Suta. A Suta was an ancient ballad singer, narrator of the epics and *Puranas*, a

story teller. His narrative art ultimately evolved into drama when he introduced actors to represent different characters in the story. After that, in Sanskrit theatre, his role was confined to introducing the play to the audiences by entering into conversation with the nati (actress) who is generally his wife, at the beginning of the performance. He is also a leader of the dramatic troupe, its director and teacher.

In the folk and traditional theatre, the Sutradhar who is known in different forms by different names such as Bhagavata and Swami, is a very important character and is always present on the stage. He is the main singer-narrator and actors take their cue from him.

SWANG

Swang is a comprehensive Sanskrit term covering the entire gamut of folk theatre, particularly of northern India. Swangs in various regions, assimilating local elements, came to be known differently. For instance in Malwa (Madhya Pradesh) it became known as 'Macha' and in Uttar Pradesh, Nautanki. However in Haryana and Punjab, the term Swang for folk theatre remained in vogue. In this region Swang plays are mostly based on local love stories and romances, rendered on stage through song, dance and music.

TAMASHA

A popular entertainment, Tamasha originated in Maharashtra in the 18th century and flourished towards the end of Maratha rule. The leader of the Tamasha troupe is known as Shahir. He is assisted by the jester known as Songadya, a couple of dancing girls and musicians. Lavani songs enliven the Tamasha proceedings. Sometimes a one-act play, known as Vag, is added to further entertain the audiences.

THERUKOOTHU

The vigorous and colourful folk dance drama of Tamil Nadu centred in and around Kanchipuram, the temple town otherwise known for its Salgars, weavers of exquisite of silk and cotton saris. Theru means 'street' and Koothu, 'play or leap'. Distinctive makeup for various characters, stiff skirts and wooden shoulder pads and other attachments mark the Koothu costume. Their repertoire consists of musical plays on the *Mahabharata* theme, particularly episodes relating to Draupadi, the Pandava queen, whose temple in the region is a venue for Kootha performances during festivals.

TIRAYATTAM

Tiram means to shine and attam means dance, hence Tirayattam means luminous



Yakshagana performers in action

dance. In this ritual dance form of Kerala, the performer, mostly representing the goddess Bhagavati or characters from the Shiva pantheon, wears colourful clothes, jewellery and makeup and dances in the light of torches made of coconut fronds, to the accompaniment of musical instruments. A number of rituals precede the dance. The dancer in the guise of the deity is called Kolam who is sometimes accompanied by some minor characters. Tirayattam performances are in the nature of votive offerings in return for some favour asked and usually take place in temple courtyards (See Literature: Sanskrit).

URUBHANGA

As the only tragedy in Sanskrit dramatic literature *Urubhanga* is a one-act play written by playwright Bhasa in the 4th century BC. In this tragic play, the central character Duryodhana, whose thigh (uru) was broken (bhanga) by Bhima's mace, dies on stage (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics – Mahabharata). This is the only time a death scene is depicted in a Sanskrit drama on stage.

VIDUSHAKA

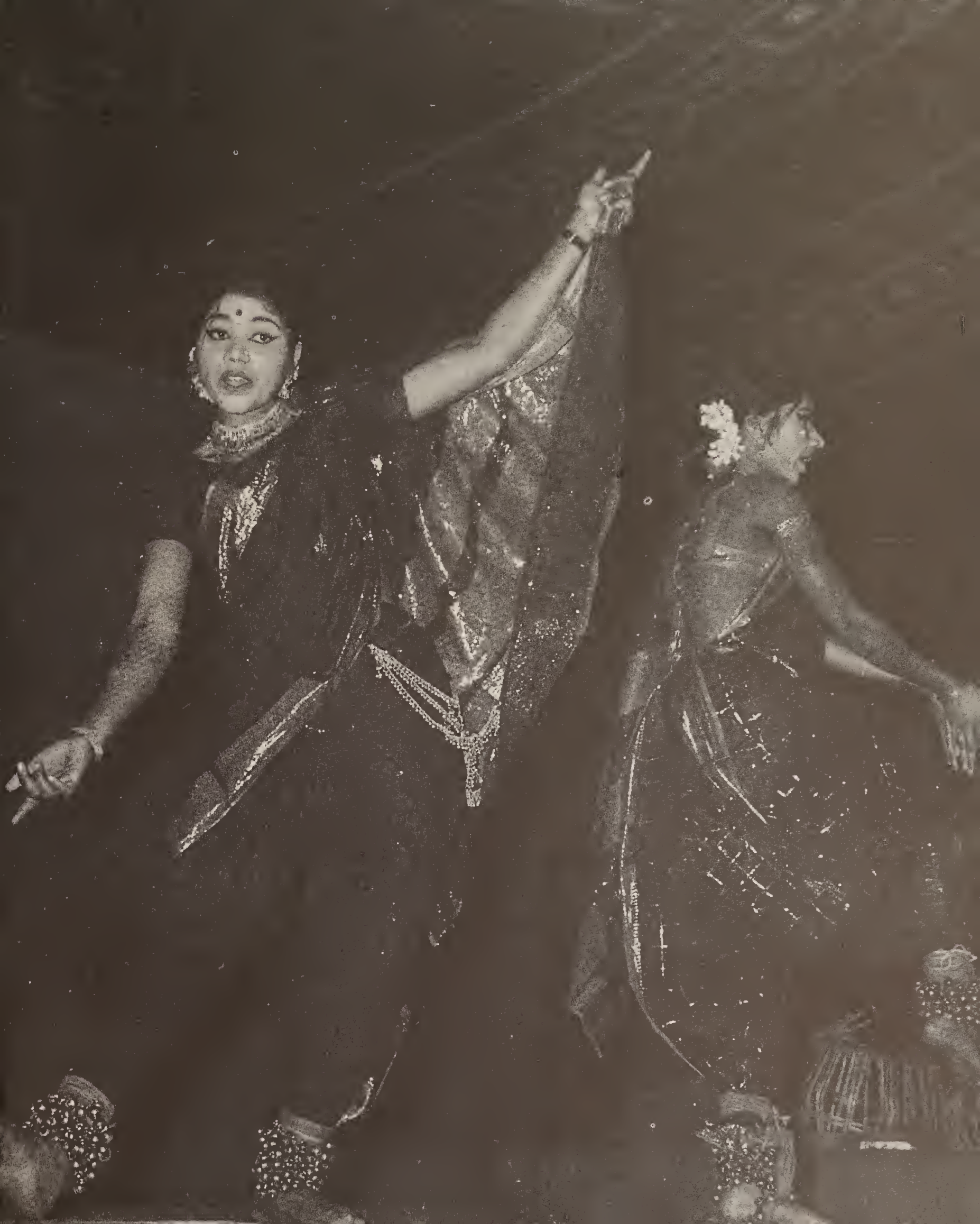
A stock jester in Sanskrit theatre, described as a dwarf, a bald-headed, greedy, gluttonous Brahmin with protruding teeth and red eyes. He is a favoured companion, confidante and devoted friend of the hero, usually a king. Ridiculed by all, he tries to unite the hero and his lady love through his funny and often ludicrous actions.

In Kudiyaattam, the Sanskrit theatre of Kerala, Vidushaka plays a very elaborate role. Before the actual commencement of the play he takes four full days for his discourse, *Nirvahana*, which he renders with mono acting, parodying the four Purusharthas or aims of existence (See Philosophy: Samkhya). He speaks in local Malayalam and explains Sanskrit and Prakrit passages spoken by other characters, lacing his commentary with humour. He enjoys unlimited freedom of speech and is not confined to the written text.

Vidushaka is known by different names in folk theatre in which he plays an important role. He performs many dramatic functions apart from amusing his audience with his humour and jokes.

YAKSHAGANA

A vibrant, open air dance drama form of Karnataka, Yakshagana draws greatly from earlier religious and ritualistic performances and folk and classical musical traditions. Yakshagana started evolving in the 15th-16th century as a popular dance drama form using themes from mythological literature, epics and *Puranas*. The plays, written in verse, allowed the performers to improvise prose dialogues during the play. The actors, all male, wear colourful makeup, costumes and headgear. Bhagvata, the chief narrator, sits on the stage with his chorus of singers and musicians. Taking their cue from his narrative, the actors act out their roles with vigorous dancing and forceful dialogue delivery.



PHILOSOPHY

Tattvaajnaana

Philosophy and religion are an integral part of life in India and are interchangeable. Great concepts embodied in ancient texts like the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, *Tripitakas* and *Jaina Sutras* go back thousands of years and continue to stimulate thinkers the world over



PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS

These terms follow a logical sequence of philosophical language.

[Many philosophical terms are long. This list indicates word breaks. Tattva-jnana, Shat-darshan, Kevala-jnana, Bodhi-sattva, Purush-artha, Chatur-ashrama, Brahma-charya-ashrama, grihasta-ashrama, Vana-prastha-ashrama, Sanyasa-ashrama, Chatur-varna, Nirasha-vada, Dwaita-vada, Bahu-vada, Satkarya-vada, Samya-avastha, Nish-trai-guna, Vijnana-vada, Syada-vada, Aneka-anta-vada, Sapta-bhangi-vada.]

BHARATIYA

Lit. of Bharat, belonging to India. In philosophy it stands for the whole of Indian thought, from the cultic to the most esoteric, theist or atheist, gross materialism to the austere spirituality, pleasure-seeking to self-effacing. The word incorporates all philosophical thought found in India, regardless of its place of origin and influenced by its special environment and history.

DARSHAN

From the word, Drisha, to see. In its special meaning 'darshan' is philosophy, which means to see with the mind's eye, to 'see' the truth. It stands for any systematic development of thought (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts).

TATTVAJNANA

Metaphysics. Each philosophical system has its own theory of the world and being.

JNANA MIMAMSA

Lit. theory of knowledge, epistemology. Each system prefaces its philosophy with epistemology and the proof, Pramana.

NITI SHASTRA

Lit. niti – ethics, shastra – science or moral science. Each system has a code of conduct, dos and don'ts eventually leading to Mukti (liberation).

ASTIK

As a philosophical term, refers to the orthodox (Sanatani) belief in which faith in the Shrutis or the *Vedas*, is foremost and fundamental. Commonly however, the word also refers to those who believe in the existence of God or theists.

It also refers to those who believe in the doctrine of Karma (See Karma) or the theory of rebirth or reincarnation, sometimes referred to as transmigration. Buddhism and Jainism do not accept Vedas as Shruti (See Shruti) nor do they believe in the existence of God, or a supreme or absolute being but because they accept the doctrine of Karma they are known as Astik in that sense alone.

NASTIK

In common usage, one who does not believe in god or atheist. In philosophy it means one who does not believe in the *Vedas* as Shruti. It also refers to one who does not accept the doctrine of Karma, one of the basic assumptions of most Indian philosophical systems (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts).

SHRUTI

Shruti means that which has been heard, a name used for the entire body of scriptures known as the *Vedas*. It is an article of faith for the Astiks (See Nastik) that the *Vedas* were 'heard' by holy men in mystical trances and were not composed by man. Since they were thus 'revealed' they must be accepted fully, without any modification, as they are eternal, infallible and authoritative. If they are beyond rational man's comprehension, that is because man has a finite mind and understanding.

The Shrutis were 'transmitted' orally from guru to disciple over the centuries as it was believed that transcribing them to the finitude of the written letter would destroy their power and efficacy.

There are six systems of philosophies that are Astik and accept the Shrutis. These are known as Shatdarshan (See Shatdarshan).

SMRITI

All those scriptures, treatises, texts, epics not accepted as Shruti are called Smriti which means memory. These are accepted as composed by men and therefore fallible, open to debate and scepticism. All the *Sutras*, *Bhashyas*, *Shastras*, *Puranas*, epics such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (See Religion: Hinduism – Epics) and *Manu Smriti* are accepted as Smriti, by tradition. The *Bhagavad Gita*, though in fact a Smriti, is held by the orthodox as the final part of the Upanishads and as such is Shruti.

SHATDARSHAN

Lit. Shat – six, darshan – philosophy, thus the six philosophies that are clubbed together and referred to as Shatdarshan. They are Purva Mimamsa, Uttar Mimamsa or Vedanta, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika. The first two are Vedic philosophies. The other four, though accepting the authorities of the Shrutis, develop their own independent, rational systems of thought but do not go to the extent of contradicting or negating Shruti.

KARMA

The doctrine of Karma is based on the assumption that all our actions or Karma are causal and have an effect (Kavya) on our future life, even beyond death and even

predetermines our next birth, caste, sex, deformities, special gifts, fortunes and so on. A cycle of birth-death-rebirth is set up and mere wish cannot stop this wheel of life (Bhava-chakra). All men are bound to this wheel, as also the soul to the body. This is the bondage (Bandhan) that man must break if he wishes to set himself free (Mukta) and stop the painful process of constant re-birth. All philosophies and religious sects (save Charvaka, who does not accept this doctrine, nor the belief in rebirth) prescribe various Margas (paths) viz. Jnana Marga (path of knowledge), Bhakti Marga (path of devotion) and Karma Marga (path of duty, action) to reach the final ideal of Moksha. Upon attaining Moksha, the bandhan (bondage) of soul to deha (body) is broken and the spirit (Atman, Jiva) freed (See Bandhan, Moksha).

BANDHAN

Lit. bondage, tied together. With the exception of Charvaka or Lokayata, all Indian philosophies believe that all conscious life is held in bondage by the physical self, life after life. This is the basis for the doctrine of Karma (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts – Karma). All believe that this cycle of bondage can be ended and a state of liberation (Moksha or Mukti) attained. Each system of thought prescribes its own path (Marga) to overcome this bondage (Bandhan).

MOKSHA

Moksha means liberation, freedom, deliverance, release, emancipation.

According to the doctrine of Karma, the state of freedom of the Jiva, Atman (self) from the bondage (Bandhan) of the physical self is Moksha (See Karma, Bandhan). This state is achieved after the release (Mukti) of the self (Atman) from the enticement of the body. Mukti is described by different names by different systems of philosophy – Moksha (Vedantists) Nirvana (Buddhists), Kevalajnana (Jainas), Kaivalya (Samkhya).

The paths leading to Moksha are varied according to different sects. The *Bhagavad Gita* prescribes three paths, the Jnana Marga (path of knowledge), Bhakti Marga (path of devotion) and Karma Marga (path of duty). The Jainas prescribe the three jewels or Tri-ratna. Buddhists follow the Eightfold Path to Nirvana (Ashtangi Marga; See Religion: Buddhism).

Moksha may be attained in the flesh (Jivan Mukti) or as more generally accepted after death or after leaving the body, which is the symbol of bondage (Videha Mukti).

Moksha is the fourth and final stage of Purushartha (See Purushartha).

KEVALAJNANA

The term for the state of the Jiva (self) after it achieves freedom from the bondage of Karma. Jiva then returns to its state of pure, omniscient, infinite knowledge. Thus Kevalajnanā, literally means 'knowledge only.' This is described as the most perfect state of being (See Jaina Philosophy).

NIRVANA

Lit. the death of a flame when the oil (Sneh) from the lamp has run out. Lord Buddha used it to describe the state of being after the cessation of the wheel of life-death-life (Bhava-chakra), due to the drying up of all desire or will to be born.

The two major schools of Buddhism, the Hinayana (Small Chariot) and the Mahayana (Great Chariot) split over their separate interpretations of 'Nirvana' (See Religion: Buddhism). One interpretation is that it was a positive state of being after the end. The other was that it was a snuffing out of life, an interpretation that led to Buddhism being called Nihilistic.

MUKTI

Mukti is the release of the self (Jiva or Atman) from the bondage of the physical self (See Bandhan, Moksha, Karma).

ARHAT

According to Hinayana (Buddhist) school an Arhat is one who has achieved Nirvana. Only a few achieve this sublime state of being and are not born again (See Buddhist Philosophy).

BODHISATTVA

According to Mahayana (Buddhist) philosophy, a Bodhisattva is one who has achieved the state of Nirvana, but unlike the Arhat, wills to be born again, though he is free from the bondage of the physical body. By this, he hopes to bring other tortured souls to the state of Nirvana (See Religion: Buddhism).

JIVAN MUKTI

The Vedantists and others debate whether Mukti or Moksha can be attained during one's lifetime, in the flesh, only after death, since the physical body is a symbol of one's bonded state. The more liberal believe that Jivan Mukti is possible in the flesh as only then can the final state be achieved (See Moksha, Videha Mukti).

VIDEHA MUKTI

Videha means without the body. Most Vedantists believe that Moksha or Mukti can be achieved only after release of the soul from the body. Shankaracharya be-

lieved that as the body is a symbol of bondage, Moksha in the body is impossible (See Jivan Mukti, Moksha; Sages and Saints: Shankaracharya).

KAIVALYA

A state of Moksha, according to some Vedantists and other orthodox thinkers.

PURUSHARTHA

Purushartha means the ideal man. The ideal life for each man is the destiny to which he is born. Traditionally Purushartha defines each man's obligation to himself and to society before he reaches his destiny in Moksha or liberation. Thus Dharma (duty), Artha (commerce), Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation) are the four ideals a man must fulfill.

DHARMA

Dharma is duty that is determined by a person's caste (jati), his birth, family status and sex. Dharma has many facets which are laid down in the *Dharma Shastras* and other scriptures.

ARTHA

Artha, here (See Purushartha) refers to commerce or wealth. Each man must be a provider for his family and as such to earn wealth is his bounden duty. Earning wealth will also bring about prosperity in society. Thus commerce has to be encouraged, and hence religious sanction is given to it by the Goddess Lakshmi, consort of Lord Vishnu, herself a symbol of wealth. She is pleased and blesses those who present before her wealth, as during worship at the Diwali festival. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* caters to the practical and pragmatic side of commerce and politics (See Festivals: Diwali).

PURUSHARTHA KAMA

Considered an essential aspect of man's life, Kama (love, desire, sensual pleasure) is a stage in the path of Purushartha. In certain religious sects, Kama is elevated to spiritual joy. Possibly, the erotic sculpture on temples is an acknowledgement of this fact. Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra* is one of the earliest books written on the art of making love (See Literature: Sanskrit).

PURUSHARTHA MOKSHA

Moksha (liberation) is the final destiny of man, applicable only to Brahmins and meritorious Kshatriyas in Purushartha. Sanyasa (renunciation) is the first step towards this end (See Moksha).

CHATURASHRAMA

Prescribed by tradition and the *Shastras* for all dwijati (twice-born) male members of society, Chaturashrama goes through the four stages of life: Brahmacharya, Grihasta,

Vanaprastha and Sanyasa (See Religion: Hinduism—Samskaras).

BRAHMACHARYASHRAMA

Refers to the life of a student conditioned by abstinence, chastity, austerity and discipline, hence Brahmachari.

This first stage of initiation of a male dwijati (twice-born) into socio-religious responsibilities begins after the students, from the age of 8-12 years are initiated by the Upanayana or Yajnopavita ceremony (sacred thread) into the caste-structured society (See Religion: Hinduism—Samskara). He then enters the gurukula (teacher's family and abode) which is his school. He lives there studying the sacred texts, *Vedas* mainly, till he is ready to return to his parent's home and shoulder household responsibilities.

GRIHASTASHRAMA

Grihastashrama is the second stage of a dwijati's life. He leaves his guru's ashrama and returns to his parent's home and has to accept the bonds of marriage, one of his duties or Dharma. As a householder, he has to observe all the rites, rituals and sacrifices applicable to him according to his caste. He follows the *Brahmanas* at this stage of life.

VANAPRASTHASHRAMA

The third stage in the life of the dwijati (twice-born) in which the head of the family, the householder, who after settling his worldly affairs, takes his wife with him to reside in a forest ashrama (retreat). There he meditates upon the deeper meaning of all the rites and rituals he had performed and the symbols he used as a householder. For this purpose he studies the *Aranyakas* (forest treatises) and prepares for the fourth and final stage of his life as a Sanyasi.

SANYASASHRAMA

The final stage of a dwijati's life open only to the physically and spiritually robust, able to withstand the dangers of the forest where the seeker hopes to attain Moksha. He renounces his social bonds by divesting himself of the sacred thread, performs his own funeral rites and obligations and repays his debts. Thus he is dead to the world and to all human ties, even his wife. In this last stage, when he is usually called a rishi or muni, he carries his *Upanishad* with him as his guide and tries to conquer his own self through knowledge. If successful, he has fulfilled his Purushartha (See Chaturashrama, Moksha, Purushartha).

CHATURVARNA

The four-tiered caste system of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishnava and Sudra. The first three are of Aryan origin and the



Buddhist prayer flag

last, the Dasyus or non-Aryans were incorporated into the social structure as the lowest servers. The Sudras were excluded from all Vedic rites and injunctions obligatory for the other three.

NIRASHAVADA

Indian philosophical systems, with the exception of Charvaka, commonly strive to forsake the physical body and world and achieve liberation (Mukti). This 'other-worldly' attitude has led to Indian philosophy being labelled nirashavada or 'pessimistic' or 'life-negating.'

SAT, ASAT, SATASAT

Term used in the Rig Veda speculating the origin of the world and life and frequently used by other philosophers to describe reality, or the indescribable. Asat means not existing, non-being, not to be, the opposite of Sat, which is Being, or that which exists.

Satasat, philosophically, is the possibility of being both Sat, (existent) and asat (non-existent) at the same time, though from a different standpoint.

NASATCHANASAT OR NASATNASAT

Reality is described by some philosophies (Buddhist and Advaita) as neither being, nor non-being—it is indescribable.

SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Samkhya

Samkhya seems to be derived from the word Samayak which literally means numbers or right knowledge (Samyak Jnana, or Samyak Khyati).

Samkhya is an Astik or orthodox system, rational and systematic in its approach. The Yoga system completes the practical aspect of attaining Moksha or Kaivalya. Thus the two systems are commonly referred to as Samkhya Yoga. Samkhya is dualist (dwaitavada) since its independent realities are Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (nature). It is pluralistic (Bahuvada) because it believes in many selves or souls (Purushas).

The origin of Samkhya is indefinite but probably contemporaneous with the *Upanishads*. The founder Kapila (7th century BC), is considered the author of the book *Samkhya Pravachana Sutra* lost long ago. Ishvara Krishna's *Samkhya Karika* is the earliest available book (3rd century AD) on the subject.

SATKARYAVADA

Satkaryavada, the pivotal theory of Samkhya, is based on the premise that every effect (Karya) pre-exists (Sat) in its cause (Karana) therefore it is possible for it to manifest itself at a later stage in the form of say, oil from mustard seed or mudpot from clay. Conversely, if the effect is non-existent (Asat) in the cause, it can never appear despite all effort. That is, nothing comes out of nothing or else the impossible would be possible, like oil out of sand or flowers in the sky (See Asatkaryavada, Arambhavada, Vivartavada).

PRAKRITI

According to Samkhya, Prakriti is the first principle of the material world, the root cause of evolution. In the process of dissolution (Pralaya), the created world reverts to its pre-created state, Prakriti (See Samyavastha).

GUNAS

The three Gunas or qualities are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which in the pre-evolution state, are held together in a perfect tension or equilibrium (Samyavastha). In this state each Guna is effective in itself but does not interact with the other two. They interact with each other the moment the process of evolution begins, and the world with its myriad creations becomes manifest. Each created thing contains all three gunas in various degrees of dominance giving it its own characteristic, whether a person, or a thing, animate or inanimate.

After dissolution (Pralaya), the Gunas revert to the state of equilibrium (Samyavastha). This stage is also known Moksha or Kaivalya.

The *Bhagavad Gita* (ch.III) refers extensively to three Gunas (See Religion: Hinduism – Bhagavad Gita).

SATTVA

Sattva, one of the three Gunas is white, luminous, bright and light. It is good, intelligent and truthful and produces pleasure, happiness, bliss. It is transparent, reflective like a mirror.

One who has a dominance of Sattva is called Sattvika, today synonymous with someone who is abstemious and is of even temperament.

RAJAS

Rajas means passion, foul, violent. Rajas Guna, red in colour, is the active principle amongst the three Gunas producing pain, anger, jealousy, violence. It activates Sattva and Tamas in the process of evolution.

A person with a dominance of Rajas is called Rajasi, colloquially meaning someone with fondness for rich and luxurious living.

TAMAS

Lit. darkness. Tamas, the third Guna is the principle of inertia in matter; has mainly negative characteristics like indifference, ignorance, laziness, passivity, confusion. It tends to overcast reality, like Maya (See Maya).

One who has a dominance of Tamas is called Tamasi.

PRAKRITI PURUSHA

Purusha and Prakriti make up Samkhya. Purusha literally refers to man, self, person. In Samkhya it stands in the principle of pure consciousness. It is the subject of the object (predicate) which is Prakriti. In this state, it cannot have any of properties of Prakriti or the three Gunas, hence it is Nistraiguna (without the three gunas). It is Udasina (indifferent to all), Kevala (only one), Sakshi (witness), Drishta (the seen) and Jnata (knower). It is neither the Ahamkara (ego) nor the Buddhi (intellect) both of which are inherent in Prakriti in the Jiva (physical self). It is totally inert and as such can have no thought process.

EVOLUTION

Samkhya bases the process of evolution that is necessary for the emanation of the world, on the theory of Satkaryavada (See Satkaryavada). This happens when the reflection of Purusha (pure consciousness) falls upon the Sattvika element of Prakriti (See Purusha, Prakriti). Instantly the evol-

utionary process begins and all three gunas begin to interact with each other producing twenty-four substances, Buddhi, Mahat and Ahamkaras.

BUDDHI

Lit. intellect, wisdom. Buddhi is the first product or effect in the process of evolution (See Evolution) and is dominated by Sattva Guna which in turn becomes the cause of Ahamkara ego (See Ahamkara).

MAHAT

Mahat is the synonym for Buddhi, the origin (cause) of the physical and material world. Mahat, though dominated by Sattva guna becomes eventually the cause of tanmatras and Mahabhutas, the subtle and gross matters of the world with the dominance of Tamas. Ahamkara (ego) is its immediate effect (See Buddhi, Gunas).

AHAMKARA

Lit. Ahamkara meaning 'I' ego or arrogance is the second evolute of Buddhi or Mahat, with Sattva Guna in dominance. It is the faculty of 'I' and 'mine,' the 'ego-sense.' Manas (mind), five Jnanendriyas, (sense-organs) and five Karmendriyas (motor-organs) are its effects.

On the other hand, Ahamkara as the effect of Mahat, becomes the cause of the physical and material world, with the dominance of Tamas guna. The five tanmatras and the five Mahabhutas elements that make up air, fire, water and earth (See Mahat) are its effects.

Buddhist

The philosophy of Buddhism was propounded when the Sakya prince, Siddhartha rose in reaction to the excesses of orthodox religion – exploitation of caste, rituals, sacrifices and general disregard of the common man. Charvaka and Jainism were the other two examples of these heterodox (Nastik) schools that arose at about the same time for the same reasons.

Buddhism arose with the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha and spread through his followers, including Ashoka of Magadha (3rd century BC; See History: Dynasties) both within the country and in the Far East. After a thousand years, its influence within the country declined mainly because of the philosophical dialectics of Shankaracharya (9th century AD; See Sages and Saints), the great logician and exponent of Advaita Vedanta. Initially, Buddhism began as a way of life, the Golden Mean, or the Middle Path (Madhyam Path) between extreme asceticism and extreme hedonism. Buddha accepts the doctrine of Karma (reincar-

nation) as the Dhamma (from Pali meaning the Law, Dharma in Sanskrit) describing all reality as a constant flux and negates all permanency. He further describes life as being one long stream of suffering, (Duhkha or pain, sorrow), caused by ignorance (Avidya) and desire (Tanha), caught in a wheel that is constantly revolving in a cycle of birth old age (Jadamaran), death and rebirth (Dharma-chakra, Bhavachakra). However, he asserts that this wheel of life can be stilled by attaining Nibbana (Pali, Nirvana in Sanskrit), which literally means 'blowing out' just as a flame in an oil lamp dies out when the oil is exhausted leading to Mukti or liberation. Buddha teaches that there is no such thing as a permanent self, ego or Atman. Later this develops into the theory of Niratnavada (no soul). He finally prescribes the Eightfold Path (Ashtangi Marga) as the solution to all suffering, the way to Nirvana. Buddha's famous Four Noble Truths are called Chatvari Arya Satya (See Chatur Arya Satya).

This simple philosophy is, by and large, still followed by Hinayana or Theravada school of Buddhism (See Religion: Buddhism).

The Mahayana School of Buddhism developed later (See Mahayana) over the question of the nature of Nirvana. Mahayana (Great Chariot) indicates the number of people who are expected to achieve Nirvana and be carried in the chariot. Hinayana (Small Chariot) or Theravada believes not many can achieve Nirvana. According to Mahayana, Bodhisattva is one who has achieved the state of Nirvana but wills the return to new birth to enable him to carry more and more people to Nirvana with him, thus requiring a large chariot. The Bodhisattva, in his new life is not subject to the bonds of ignorance and desire, that is, Karma.

BUDDHA, GAUTAMA

Buddha, the wise one, was the title given to young Prince Siddhartha, of the Sakya clan, founder of Buddhism, who renounced the world at the age of 29. He wandered as a mendicant, teaching his philosophy of the Middle Path, and organizing his followers. He found enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, Bihar, while meditating under the Bodhi tree. He died at the age of 80 in Kushinagara. Relics of his mortal remains were carried far and wide and stupas built on them as memorial. Famous among these stupas are the ones in Piprahwa near Nepal, Shah-ji-Kidheri near Peshawar, Taxila, Nagarjunakonda and Bhattiprolu near Guntur (See Archaeology/Architecture: Old Cities; Religion: Buddhism).

THERAVADA OR HINAYANA

Theravada, the earliest school of Buddhism was formed at the second Council of the Elders and reached its peak in the 3rd century BC when Ashoka sent missionaries all over the country and abroad to preach Buddhism. It has followed as closely as possible, the tenets and practices established by the Buddha himself. Theravada does not deify the Buddha as the later Mahayana sect does nor do they have elaborate rituals. Their belief in Nirvana is also much as told by the Buddha.

Sri Lanka to this day remains a stronghold of Theravada Buddhism.

Swatantrika and Vaibhasika are the two realist schools that have developed in Theravada.

MAHAYANA

Mahayana meaning Great Chariot was the later school of Buddhism formed by a breakaway group of the early Theravada or Hinayana school. The Mahayana school, formed at the Second Council of the Elders held about a hundred years after the death of the Buddha, grew in many directions, doctrinally, organisationally and spread all over the world, particularly to China from the north-west part of the country as well as to Nepal and Tibet. From China it went to Japan and then to America. Yogachara or Vijnanavada, (Idealism) and Madhyamika or Shunyavada (Nihilism) are the two important philosophical schools of Mahayana (See Bodhisattva, Hinayana, Theravada).

SHUNYAVADA

Nagarjuna (1st-2nd century BC) founded the Shunyavada School of Philosophy, one of the two schools of Mahayana philosophy, which says that Reality is Tathata (that). Or is, is not, both is and is not, neither is nor is not, in fact it is indescribable (Avakhtavyama). In other words, it is beyond the four categories (Chatushkoti – Vinirmukta).

CHATUR ARYA SATYA

Chatur Arya Satya are the Four Noble Truths that constitute the whole philosophy of the Buddha. They are: there is suffering; there is a cause for this suffering; this suffering can be stopped by achieving the state of Nirvana. The fourth describes the ethical or practical path to Nirvana spelt out in the Eightfold Path or Ashtangi Marga (See Religion: Buddhism).

MADHYAM PATH

The Buddha describes his path to enlightenment (Nirvana) as the Middle Path, (Madhyam Path) as it avoids extreme asceticism and extreme pleasure and indul-

gences that only the rich and the indolent can afford.

DHAMMA, DHARMA.

The doctrine of Karma or the doctrine of reincarnation, rebirth, is a central belief of the Buddha. He describes the process as a constant flux and change. Nothing remains static. According to the Buddha, if this law is understood, all will be understood (See Chatur Arya Satya).

ASHTANGI MARGA

The last of the Four Noble Truths, the Ash-tangi Marga or the Eightfold Path, the ethical and practical way advised by the Buddha to overcome suffering and achieve enlightenment or Nirvana. It is a path prescribed for the common man earning his bread or for the ascetic seeking Nirvana.

Its elements are Right Faith (Samya Drishti), Right Resolve (Sankalpa), Right Speech (Vak), Right Action (Karmanta), Right Livelihood (Ajma), Right Effort (Vjayana), Right Thought (Smriti) and Right Concentration (Samadhi).

Through these steps, an initiate may achieve joy (Shila), awareness (Prajne) and ultimately, the full, detached enlightened stage of Nirvana, Jivan Mukti (See Chatur Arya Satya).

PRATITYA SAMUTPADA: Twelve links *Avidya*: Ignorance, mistaken knowledge or illusion, or delusion. Primary cause of death and rebirth.

Samskara: Inherited characteristics due to previous birth.

Vijnana: The first appearance of consciousness in an embryo.

Nama-rupe: Name and form. The beginning of the psycho-physical being.

Shadayatna: The five sense organs plus one mind.

Sparsba: Touch. The contact between a sense organs and its stimulant object, eg, skin contact with ice.

Vedana: Stimulation. A sense-experience. Sensation.

Trishna: Thirst. Desire for sensual pleasure. Avidya (ignorance) and Trishna are the two main causes of the desire to be born again.

Upadana: The desire to cling to sensual pleasures.

Bhava: Will to be born. The innate desire to taste once more the pleasures of the senses, compels us to take rebirth. This cycle or wheel of rebirth is also known as Bhava-chakra.

Jati: Birth in this life.

Jadamaran: Literally Jada is old age and



Lamps lit in memory of departed souls

maran is death. Finally, a pleasure-filled life is overcome with the inescapable fact of old age and death. This is suffering. This suffering, in its repetitive form (rebirth) is what the Buddha wanted to put an end through Nirvana.

Jaina

Jaina, an ancient, indigenous philosophy, contemporary to the *Vedas* is derived from 'Jina' or conqueror, one who gains victory over the bonded self, thus gaining Kevalajnana. The founder and first Tirthankara is Rishabhadeva.

Jainism is a heterodox (Nastik) philosophy and opposes the authority of the *Vedas* as Shruti. It does not accept the belief in the existence of God or one Universal Being. It however does believe in the theory of rebirth.

The two major sects of Jainism are Digambara and Shvetambara. Chandragupta Maurya (c. 317 – 293 BC) left his throne and became a Digambar Jain monk. Under the leadership of his guru, Ganadhara Bhadrabahu, their sect went down south and flourished there for several years (See Religion: Jainism).

TIRTHANKARA

Tirthankara, lit. founder of the Jaina faith or teacher, a title given to Jaina saints who have been responsible in some way for the advancement of Jainism. There are 24 Tirthankaras in all, Rishabhadeva being the first and Mahavira the last in 6th century BC (See Religion: Jainism).

RISHABHADEVA

Rishabhadeva, the founder of Jainism was the first Tirthankara. His dates and other details are unknown. He is mentioned in

Yajur Veda (See Religion: Hinduism).

PARSVANATHA

Parsvanatha is the 23rd Tirthankara, said to have lived 250 years before Mahavira, in the 8th century BC. Parsvanatha was the son of King Ikshavaku and Queen Vama of Varanasi. He married Prabhavati, daughter of the king of Kushasthala and had a son Prasanjit. At 30, he renounced the world and after deep penance and meditation he found Kevalajnana in Varanasi. He preached extensively in the north and had a vast following of monks and nuns. He died at the age of 100 on Mount Sammeta, now known as Parsvanatha Hill, Gomoh, in Bihar (See Tirthankara, Digambara).

MAHAVIRA

The last of the Tirthankaras, Mahavira was formerly known as Vardhamana (c. 599 – 527 BC). His father was Siddhartha, chief of the Jnatika tribe; mother Trishala was the sister of Chetaka, chief of the Licchavis. He lived at Vaishali, north Bihar and was a Kshatriya related to King Bimbisara of Magadha. He was also a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. When he was 30 he left his home in search of liberation or Mukti and wandered for 12 years before he found enlightenment or Kevalajnana. He wandered along the Ganga preaching his gospel and probably founded the Digambar or nude sect of monks. He died at Pava near Patna, a place of pilgrimage for Jains today (See Religion: Jainism).

DIGAMBARA

Lit. Digambara means sky, space, direction and ambar means cloth, that is, sky-clad or nude. The earlier and more austere of the two sects of Jainism, their nudeness implies complete emancipation over their

physical self and total indifference to society. They also permit an early, voluntary death to hasten the process to final liberation, Kevalajnana.

The origin of Digambaras is not known but Lord Mahavira himself was said to have been nude and led nude followers. Ganadhari Bhadrabahu, a great scholar, was a well-known leader of the Digambara sect during the time of Chandragupta Maurya and led his followers south to escape an imminent famine. After several years he returned to the north. He went away to Nepal and died there. *Kalpa Sutra* is attributed to him.

SHVETAMBARA

Shvetambara (white-robed), the second of the two Jaina sects, in deference to social sensibilities permit the use of a simple white cloth to cover the body. There are few doctrinal differences with the Digambaras but these are more practical and ritualistic differences.

Shtulabhadra, who opposed Bhadrabahu of the Digambara sect, called a council of monks at Pataliputra to record in Prakrit the history and canons of the Jains for the first time. The Shvetambaras kept adding to their scriptures over the years at various councils. Some of the better known texts are *Anga*, *Upanga*, *Prakirnakka*, *Mulasutra*, *Nandidut Anuyogadvara* and *Tattvadhigama Sutra* (See Digambara).

ANEKANTAVADA

Anekantavada means theory of many-sided realities. Jaina philosophers believe that reality is not one but many. Moreover, knowledge of reality or truth is manifold, like that of a many faceted diamond.

A popular *Jataka* story a folktale or parable (See Literature: Pali) illustrates their theory well. Once six blind men went to 'see' an elephant. Each man felt the part of the elephant nearest to him. One caught the trunk, another an ear, the others, a tusk, a tail, a leg and the back. Satisfied that they 'knew' the elephant now they returned to their village, discussing the wonder that they had 'seen.' The man who felt the legs said it was a tree, the one who felt the trunk thought it was a snake, another thought the tail was a rope and so on. Soon they began to quarrel with each other, disputing the validity of each other's statement. A passerby stopped to enquire the reason for their dispute and when he heard what they were arguing about, he laughed and explained to them the limitation of each one's viewpoint. So it is with all of us, limited selves or Jivas, with our fragmentary knowledge (See



Sculpted Jaina Tirthankaras at Jaisalmer

Jiva, Ajiva, Syadavada, Saptabhanginaya).

SYADAVADA

Though the derivative of this term is doubtful, the Jains use it to mean relativity of knowledge, perception or truth. To guard against dogmatism the Jains insist on prefacing each statement, judgment or proposition by the word 'syad,' indicating the limitation of knowledge. Thus knowledge, or truth, is relative and momentary, even fragmentary. Syadavada is expressed in the theory of the sevenfold judgment, Saptabhanginaya (See Anekantavada, Saptabhanginaya).

SAPTABHANGINAYA

Saptabhanginaya or sevenfold judgement is the expanded version of Syadavada, its practical form or expression.

Jains do not believe a statement is complete without stating all the other varying conditions of that object or thing. Here, Jains accept the four categories (chatushkoti) formulated by the Shunyavadins but further expand it to seven to be precise and correct. Hence, Saptabhanginaya (See Anekantavada, Syadavada).

Charvaka/Lokayata

Charvaka, also known as Lokayata, is a heterodox, Nastik system of Philosophy in every sense of the word, rejects Shrutis, all belief in god or gods, and does not even accept the widely prevalent belief in the doctrine of Karma or reincarnation. It is a wholly materialistic philosophy which be-

lieves only in Loka (world) and nothing beyond it. Nature is the only reality and nature is indifferent to morals, virtues, good, bad, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor. Therefore one should act according to one's own desire or pleasure and reject that which is painful.

Charvaka philosophy seems to have risen as a reaction to the excesses of the Brahmin priests and an exploitative society. It denounces all forms of religious rites and rituals and advocates a hedonistic and pragmatic attitude to life. According to some, Brihaspati is said to be the founder, though his text *Brihaspati Sutra* is lost. According to others, Charvaka, a disciple of Brihaspati is said to be the founder. Yet others say that the name 'Charvaka' has been derived from the root 'charv' which means 'to chew' (the cud), since to 'eat, drink and be merry' seems to be the dominant theme of this cultic philosophy. The only extant writing is *Tattvapaplavasimba* (c. 700 AD) by Jayarashi Bhatt.

Loka or world, also refers to the common people, janata, as distinct from the elitist, cultured society and represents the doctrine of the world of the common man – materialism. It is a synonym for Charvaka and is the central doctrine.

Vedanta

Lit. *Veda*, the sacred scriptures; Shruti, anta or end, thus the end of the *Vedas* or the *Upanishads*. Vedanta or the approximately

108 *Upanishads* thus refers to the philosophical musings of the whole body of the *Vedas*. They are quite apart in spirit and content from the rest of the *Vedas*.

Thus *Upanishads* are called speculative philosophy as they muse over the question of the causes of the world and Being, and the links between one who is thinking and speculating. Thus the world or the Cosmos (Prakriti), are the major concerns of the *Upanishads* and subsequently of Vedanta philosophy.

The *Upanishads* are full of contradictions but as Shruti (See Shruti), each word must be accepted as correct. There are various interpretations of Vedanta propounded by philosophers like Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Badangana.

BRAHMAN

'Brahman' (from the root 'Brih' meaning to grow, to evolve) has evolved in meaning over centuries of Vedic philosophic enquiry. In the *Upanishads*, it represents Ultimate Reality where Brahman and Atman are one and Brahman is referred to as the Sole Reality.

BRAHMAN (SYNONYMS)

Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

An aphorism for Brahman in the *Upanishads*. *Satyam* – the truth, *Shivam* – the good and *Sundaram* – the beautiful (See Satchitananda, Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Brahman).

Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam.

Satyam is the Truth, Jnanam is Knowledge and Anantam is Infinite (See Brahman, Satyam Shivam Sundaram).

Satchitananda

A pure being, pure consciousness and pure bliss.

Tajjatan

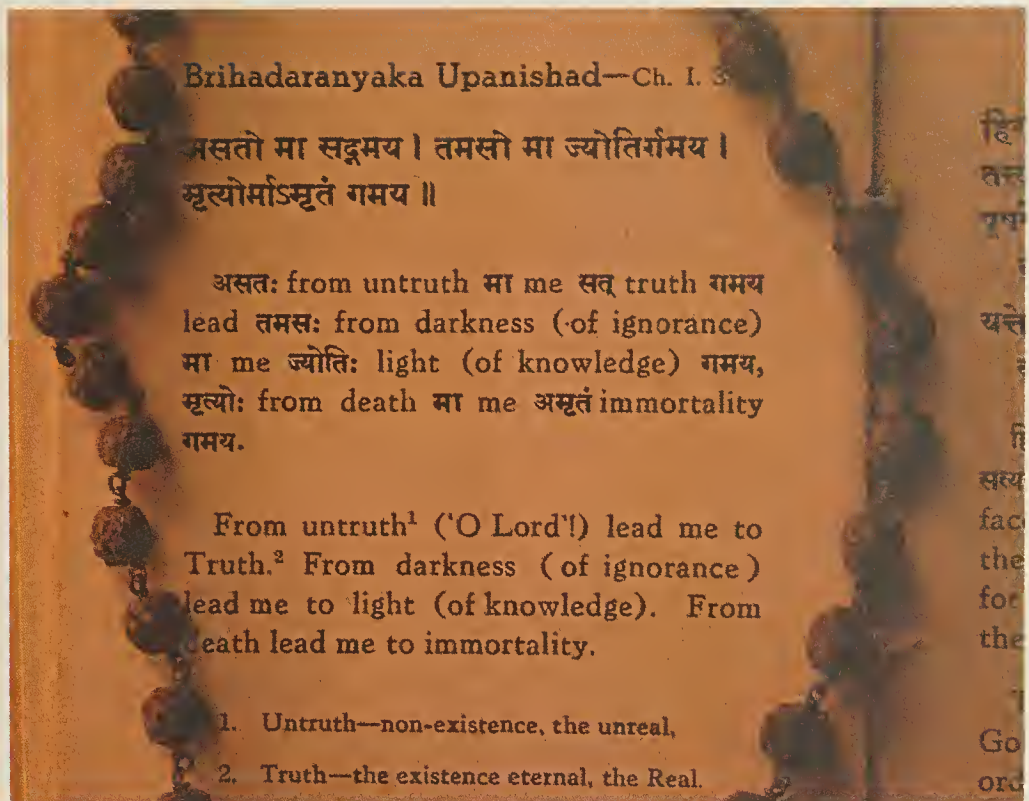
A description of the universal and cosmic aspect of the Brahman.

Tat Tvam Asi

'Tat' means 'That is', a word that stands for Brahman or Atman. 'Tattvam asi', is 'That thou art' (*Chandogya Upanishad*. See Satchitananda, Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Satyam Shivam Sundaram, Brahman).

ATMAN

Atman or self is a synonym for Brahman, universal, immanent, transcendent and unchanging according to the *Upanishads*. This search for the self, Atman, has been one of the major preoccupations of the rishis in the *Upanishads*. It is the self alone that is real, all else is transitory and unreal. All bondage to relations such as wife, son, father or mother is delusory. Thus it is that the sage prepares himself for his final journey to seek his Atman to enable him to



Text from *Upanishad*

achieve Moksha, the only liberation from constant birth. When the sage is able, through deep meditation (Samadhi) to identify himself with the Atman, finally Moksha is realized and he says, 'Aham Brahmanasmi' (Aham – I, Brahma; Asmi – am. See Brahman, Moksha).

JIVA

Jiva is a living being, self. All Jivas are said to be imbued with Atman, the pure consciousness. Jiva is not a pure substance as it is a bonded union of the pure Atman and the limited, weak and frail non-Atman, the objective part of being. Thus in itself a Jiva is a complex of subject-object being, ego. Karma keeps the two united in its relentless wheel of life-death-life. It is only when the Jiva realizes its ignorance (Avidya) that with the help of yogic meditation, the identification changes to Atman and Moksha is attained (See Atman, Brahman, Moksha).

JAGAT

Jagat, said to be the manifestation of the Brahman, refers to the physical and material world, otherwise known as Prakriti. There are different viewpoints on the relation of Brahman and Jagat. Shankaracharya (See Sages and Saints) says Brahman is the only reality. What we see and experience as Jagat is only illusion or Maya. "Brahman satyam, Jagat mithia," is one of his famous sayings which means Brahman is truth; Jagat is deceitful, false.

Madhavacharya, on the other hand, ac-

cepts the separate existence of Jagat, Jiva and Brahma or Ishvara, although they are created and dependent on Brahman (See Samkhya, Maya, Brahman; Religion: Hinduism – Concepts; Sages and Saints).

MAYA

Shvetasvatara Upanishad uses the word 'Maya' as 'illusion' and 'Mayin' as the illusion-maker, in this case, the mighty lord Maheshwara.

The philosophy of Maya or Mayavada, has become well known through its chief expounder, Shankaracharya (c. 850 AD) (See Sages and Saints) who held that all that is unchanging is real, that which changes is unreal. Brahman or Atman is the only reality because it is unchanging.

Many synonyms are used for Maya of which Avidya (ignorance) is the most common. Maya is also called Shakti, power, ie, creative power. The changing world, Prakriti, Jagat is created by Maya inherent in Brahman (See Buddhism, Vedanta, Brahman, Atman, Jagat).

PRATIBHASIKA SATYA

Shankaracharya propounded three levels of Knowledge: Pratibhasika Satya, Vyavaharika Satya and Paramarthika Satya.

He systematizes Knowledge in different levels of truth or reality. By this system, he is able to accommodate each level of knowledge or illusion, however transitory and unreal it may be.

The lowest level of Knowledge, as long as the illusion lasts, is called Pratibha-

sika Satya, which is hallucinatory, or illusory Knowledge. For example, in the dark, mistaking a rope for a snake we are afraid and try and kill it with a stick. When we flash a light upon the snake, for better aim, we see it is just a rope and the snake vanishes forever. Although this is fleeting knowledge, yet it has the full force of real knowledge while it lasted.

The falsity of this knowledge came about only when we saw the rope in better light (Knowledge). At this level, it becomes Vyavaharika Satya or empirical Knowledge.

VYAVAHARIKA SATYA

The second level of truth or Knowledge, to Shankaracharya, it is the everyday, common sense knowledge of the man on the street. He accepts the world of experience as real and he usually trusts his five sense organs and his mind to give him accurate knowledge of this world and himself. Only when man sees in the empirical way does the illusion of the snake vanish (See Prati-bhasika Satya). The rope is all that remains.

PARIMANTHIKA SATYA

The highest level of Knowledge, according to Shankaracharya transcends all mundane human knowledge and experience and gives the human mind a full, radiant exposure of the Reality and majesty of the Absolute Being or Satchitananda Brahman. Once one has known this reality or rather intuited it, all the other experiences pale in comparison and are unreal (Asat).

Vaisheshika

Vaisheshika, one of the earlier, orthodox, Astik systems of philosophy along with Nyaya, its complementary philosophy, is at least contemporaneous with Buddhism. The founder of Vaisheshika is Kanada, author of *Vaisheshika Sutra*. Vaisheshika believes that the world is made up of innumerable, eternal atoms of matter or Padartha and though there are certain common characteristics, each atom is yet distinct, unique or Vishesha. Vaisheshika is said to be more an attempt at scientific analysis than a metaphysical system.

Nyaya

Gautama, said to be the founder and author of *Nyaya Sutra* expounded Nyaya as a complementary philosophy of Vaisheshika and Astik. Nyaya which literally means 'just' and 'right,' here stands for that by means of which the mind comes to a valid conclusion. It is thus a science of correct knowledge, the subject (Pramatri), object (Prameya), cognition, (Pramiti) and means of knowledge (Pramana). By Pra-



Shankaracharya

mana (also proof) we are able to test the validity of knowledge.

Vijnanavada

The founder of the school Yogachara or Vijnanavada (Doctrine of Consciousness or Idealism) is variously said to be Maitreyanatha, Asanga or Asvaghosa but its most important expounder is Vasubandhu. Vijnanavada deals mostly with the problem of knowledge given the fact that the world or reality is in flux compounded by the fact the knower, the subject, is also constantly changing. Thus it is impossible to affirm the independent existence and reality of the external world.

Yoga

Yoga means union, the spiritual union of Jiva (See Jiva) with the universal soul, Atman, according to its usage in the *Upanishads*. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Yoga is said to be the highest state achieved through concentration and discipline from which a person cannot be shaken or uprooted no matter what the cost or pain.

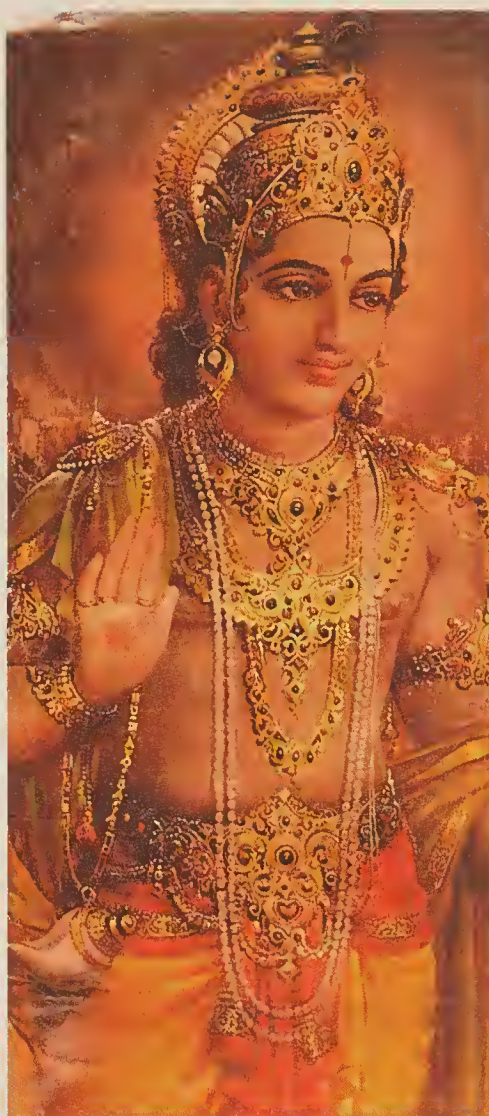
Yoga is one of the six systems of orthodox, Astik philosophy and is complementary to Samkhya. The two systems together make a complete thought and action philosophy and are referred to as Samkhya Yoga. Whereas Samkhya provides the metaphysical aspect of thoughts, Yoga provides the practical discipline required to achieve this common end of liberation. One major difference, though, is that while Samkhya is fully non-theistic, Nirishavada Yoga is theistic, believing in a god besides Purusha and the 24 elements of Prakirti Samkhya.

According to Patanjali, founder of this system, Yoga is the discrimination (Vivekajnana), between subject-object that is Purusha-Prakriti union. This discrimination is possible through this, an eight-fold-step Yoga or Asthanga Yoga. The final step is Samadhi, (concentration, meditation) which is the true Yoga when Vivekajnana is awakened and Purusha disengages itself from Prakriti, and the final end of liberation which is Kaivalya, is achieved (See Kaivalya).

ASHTHANGA YOGA

The Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali lays down an eight-fold path of discipline for psycho-physical discipline for those who are desirous of attaining Moksha or liberation (See Yoga). The first five are for physical control and the rest are for control of the mind.

Yama: The dos and don'ts of ethical actions common to all religions – to speak the truth, do not steal, do not kill and so on.



Gitopadesam

Niyama: Discipline, rule, developed into a way of life, including daily habits of personal hygiene, stoicism, scholarship.

Asanas: The physical postures involved in practice for which yoga is best known.

Pranayama: Breath-control. The physical exercises are further perfected by controlling the inhalation and exhalation of breath, through one or both nostrils. Said to be of utmost importance for the mind.

Pratyahara: Control of the senses from external objects to inward goals – a process of introversion of interest, slowly detaching the Jiva from physical, external controls.

Dharana: Concentration, say, on the tip of one's nose, or point between the eyebrow. The aim of the practice is to develop an unwavering mind.

Dhyana: Meditation on a chosen object or thought. Progressively deeper depths of meditation are reached by this practice.

Samadhi: Deep concentration. The final stage leading to Vivekajnana. All thought is said to cease giving place to joy, bliss, An-

anda or Kaivalya, the state of liberation (See Mind and Body: Yoga).

Bhagavad Gita

The *Bhagavad Gita* or song of God has been translated into several languages and is perhaps the best known religio-philosophical book of Hindu scriptures. Though it is taken to be a part of Bhishma Parva of the great epic, *Mahabharata*, it was probably composed much later. It is dated according to different scholars between 200 BC to 100 AD and reflects the influence of the *Upanishads* in its spirituality.

The *Gita* attempts to make religion broad-based and inclusive of all and for its time it was a dynamic and progressive work.

The book, a dialogue between Arjuna and Lord Krishna is seen and heard by Sanjaya and reported to king Dhritarashtra even as the two armies of the Pandavas and the Kauravas were poised for battle at Kurukshetra. The poet-philosopher chooses this dramatic moment to pose a moral question of utmost significance. How should a person act? How should he choose between what is right and wrong? Should Arjuna kill his own kith and kin, his revered gurus and elders, against the injunction of the scriptures and against his own conscience to gain a bit of land? The dialogue which follows between Arjuna and his charioteer, Lord Krishna, analyses each man's duty, Dharma and what he should do, Karma.

Lord Krishna tries to galvanize him into action by placing all kinds of arguments and persuasions, from ridiculing to rationalizing, finally to dazzling him with a revelation of himself as divine (Virat Swaroop). In the end, he leaves the decision to Arjuna, to do battle or not.

The *Gita* teaches us to subjugate our psycho-physical self with reason (Jnana) and understand our highest self (Atman). Having known one's self, one must act according to one's duty (Svadharma).

The *Gita* recommends three paths (Margas) to gain one's goal which is Dharma rather than Moksha. Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge), Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

A lit incense stick stands vertically on a mound of sand. A thin wisp of white smoke rises from the tip. Several pink rose petals are scattered around the base of the stick and on the sand in the foreground. The background is a vast, flat expanse of sand under a hazy sky.

RELIGION

Dharma

**All the world's major religions
have a home in India, which itself
produced Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.
It gave sanctuary to Jews and Zoroastrians and
absorbed the military and religious
campaigns of Islam and Christianity – it
even boasts of a beautiful
Baha'i Temple**

BUDDHISM

BUDDHA

Lit: enlightened, awakened; the name given to Siddhartha, the son of a chief of the Sakya tribe in the Nepalese terai, of the clan named Gautama. When he was 29, he was deeply distressed by the sight of sickness, old age and death, from which his princely life had shielded him. He abandoned his wife, Yashodhara, his son Rahul and his life of comfort for that of an ascetic and wandered on foot from place to place in search of a solution to the puzzle of life and death. Six years later he is said to have attained enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi (pipal) tree in Uruvela near the Niranjana river. Thereafter he came to be known as Buddha the Enlightened One. The Mahayana School of Buddhist thought places him between 566-486 or 563-483 BC (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Buddhist Temples; Philosophy).

Mahayana Buddhism (See Mahayana, Hinayana) defines a Buddha as a saviour of the world. While there are many types of Buddhas, the most important are the Adi-Buddha, five Dhyani-Buddhas, five Manusi-Buddhas (of whom Gautama Buddha is the fourth) and five Dhyani Bodhisattvas or Buddhas to be. According to the Buddhavamsa of *Khuddaka-Nikaya* (Buddhist canonical books), there were 24 Buddhas before Gautama. Other texts go on to list over a 100 Buddhas. It is believed that the next Buddha to be born after Gautama will be Maitreya who will strive to cleanse Kaliyuga, the present age of evil, with his teachings.

When Buddhism became popular, the Buddha was absorbed into the Hindu pantheon as an avatar of Vishnu (See Hinduism – Concepts – Dashavatara).

DOCTRINE

The three most important concepts of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Middle Way. The Four Noble Truths are birth, age, disease and death. To be free of their cycle, the Noble Path offers a way: right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. It avoids the extremes: the pursuit of desires and pleasures on one hand and pursuit of pain and hardship on the other, thus leading to the Middle Way (See Philosophy).

THERAVADA/HINAYANA

Early in the history of Buddhism, sectarian differences began to appear. Tradition tells us there were two great councils of Buddhist orders. The first came soon after the

Buddha's death and the second a hundred years later. When the second occurred, the sect of Mahasanghikas (members of the 'Great Order') broke away ostensibly on account of monastic discipline, but probably on doctrinal grounds too. The remaining council, which claimed to be the traditional Buddhist order, began to call its system Theravada (teaching of the Elders). Theravada Buddhism was essentially what it is now. The monks taught a dynamic phenomenalism, maintaining that everything in the universe, including the gods and the souls of living beings, was in a state of constant flux. Resistance to the cosmic flux of phenomena and craving for performance, where it could not be found, led to inevitable sorrow.

MAHAYANA

The Mahasanghikas who broke away from traditional Buddhism called their new school Mahayana (the Greater Vehicle or the Great Chariot) as opposed to the old school which they contemptuously referred to as Hinayana (the Lesser Vehicle or Small Chariot). This school offered salvation to all and its scriptures also claimed to represent the final doctrines of the Buddha, revealed only to his spiritually advanced followers, whereas earlier doctrines were viewed as merely preliminary. Though Mahayana Buddhism with its pantheon of heavenly Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and its idealistic metaphysics, was strikingly different in many respects from the Hinayana (Theravada), it can be viewed as a system coming a full circle. A tendency to revere the Buddha as a god had probably existed even in his own lifetime. As with all Indian religions, divinity is not something completely transcendent or far exalted from mortal things as it is for Jews, Christians or Muslims. Mahayana thought was thus closer to Hindu beliefs.

ABABA

Also known as Hahava or the eight cold hells of Buddhist mythology. Ababa is the fourth. (The cold being so intense, speech is rendered impossible. The only sound is that of cold air passing through the throat creating the sound Ababa...). The other cold hells are Arbuda, Nirarbuda, Atata, Huvava, Utpala, Padma and Mahapadma.

ABHIBHAVAYATANA

In Pali, Abhibhayatana or total mastery over the senses. In Buddhist philosophy this is the stage preparatory to meditation when the senses are completely restrained.

ABHIDHARMA

In Pali, Abhidhamma. Lit. great dharma or special dharma. *Abhidharma Kosa*: A

famous treatise on the philosophy of the Sarvastivadin Buddhists (the doctrine of Sarvastivada, an early Buddhist school of philosophy which states that everything 'exists') by Acharya Vasubandhu. *Abhidharma Pitaka* is the third section of the *Tipitaka*, the collection of Buddhist canonical scriptures.

ABHIJNA

In Pali, Abhinna. Lit. superior knowledge. There are six types of knowledge, known collectively as Sadabhijna. Sakyamuni-acquired this knowledge the night before he became the Buddha on Baisakhi eve. The abhijnas are:

Divya-chakshu – divine eye

Divya-stotra – divine ear

Parachitta-jnana – knowledge of the thought of others

Purva-nivasa-anusmriti – recollection of former incarnations

Riddhi-saksat-kriya – direct experience of magical powers

Asravaksaya – knowledge of the finality of life.

Abhijna is the stage just before enlightenment on the Four Noble Truths.

ACHALA

Lit. immovable. Name of a Mahayana tutelary god. Also denotes the dikpala (guardian deity) of the north-east direction. A Tibetan Buddhist name for the 7th or 8th Bodhisattva Bhumi in the religious progression of Bodhisattva (See Philosophy). Achaladeva: A Bodhisattva who later becomes a Buddha.

ADIBUDDHA

Lit. primordial Buddha, a concept popular in Nepal, Tibet and Java. The Adibuddha is more of a protector than a creator. He is the embodiment of Sunya. The five Dhyani Buddhas originate from him (See Doctrine). Also the highest Vajrayana (See Vajrayana) god to whom the five Dhyani Buddhas owe their loyalty.

AJATA VADA

A Buddhist doctrine according to which there is no such thing as 'the origin of the universe.'

AKANISTHA

In Pali, Akanittha. The Brahmins called the Buddha by this name because, according to them, he decried the *Vedas* (Aka).

AKANISTHABHAVANA

One of the heavens in Buddhism, the zenith of the universe; the nadir is Avichi.

AKSOBHYA

A Dhyani-Buddha, he is said to live in the eastern paradise, Abhirati. He is at times mentioned as a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. Among his emanations are the Boddhisatvas, Manjusri and Vajrapani.

ALARA KALAMA

One of the gurus to whom Gautama had gone after leaving his home; from whom he learnt ecstatic meditation (Samapatti) but soon discovered this was not the path to 'enlightenment' and resolved to apply himself to the 'great effort' (Mahapradhana).

ANANDA

One of Gautama Buddha's favourite disciples and also a cousin. He joined the Buddhist order the second year after Buddha's enlightenment.

ANATTA

The doctrine of the non-self or non-ego, the ultimate unreal self.

ANGULIMALA

Lit. a garland of fingers. The name of Ahimsaka, a notorious bandit who later repented and became a follower of the Buddha. Ahimsaka (the harmless) originally fell out with his guru, who in lieu of his usual 'guru dakshina' or tuition fees (See Religion : Hinduism – Concepts) demanded 1000 human fingers. Ahimsaka began collecting them by killing travellers in the Galini wood in the ancient kingdom of Kosala. Thus he came to be known as Angulimala. After he came under the spell of the Buddha, he atoned for his sins and acquired miraculous powers.

ARHAT

The saintly disciple who has fulfilled all conditions for salvation.

BHIKHU

Or bhikshu. Lit. a mendicant. In Buddhism, a bhikhu is a monk who is restricted to eight essential possessions: his three robes, a begging bowl, a cloth belt, a needle and thread, a straight-edged razor and a water strainer (to rescue the insects that may have fallen into his drinking or cooking water). A Buddhist nun is called a bhikkhuni.

BON

The animistic religion of Tibet. Formerly the term 'Bon' (invokers) was only used for the adherents of the religion but later in the 8th century with increasing Buddhist influence, the religion itself came to be called Bon. Local Buddhism absorbed most of the divinities of the Bon religion, giving Tibetan Buddhism a distinctive character, with masked 'devil' dances performed by the lamas (monks) on special occasions.

BUDDHABHADRA

A Buddhist scholar who worked in China, he claimed descent from a Sakya family of Kapilavastu (the capital of the Sakyas of whom Gautama's father was the chief). He studied Buddhist literature in Kashmir and travelled to China with Fa-hien. He wrote a Chinese translation of the entire text of the *Avatansaka Sutra*, which had been imported from Khotan in 60 volumes.

BUDDHACHARITA

A Mahayana poetic narrative in Sanskrit by Asvaghosa (1st – 2nd century AD), it is the earliest known comprehensive record of the life of the Buddha. In its Sanskrit form, only parts of the 1st and 14th chapters are presently available but all 28 chapters are found in Chinese and Tibetan translations.

BUDDHADATTA

A contemporary of Buddhaghosa, he studied in a monastery in Sri Lanka. His principal works are the *Vinaya Vinnichaya* and *Abhidhammavavatara*, both commentaries on their respective Pitakas (See Tipitaka). He also wrote a commentary on the Buddhavamsa called *Madhurattavilasini*.

BUDDHAGHOSA

A monk scholar who travelled to Sri Lanka in the 4th - 5th century, he wrote three commentaries on the Pali *Tipitaka* or the complete canon (See Tipitaka). He is best known for his compendium on Buddhist thoughts and practices, the *Visuddhimagga*, (encyclopedia) said to have been compiled in Sri Lanka.

BUDDHAKAYA

Lit. Buddha body. A theory which stated that the Buddha was endowed with two bodies – a cosmic body and a body of transformation. In course of time the Mahayana school developed a three-body (Trikaya) theory. According to this the Buddha exists as Dharmakaya (truth body), Sambhogakaya (the enjoyment body) and Nirmanakaya (the assumed body).

BUDDHAKALPA

Lit. the Buddha period. After the Buddha's nirvana (enlightenment), the first 500 years were reckoned as the years of 'correct doctrine,' the second period of 1000 years closely followed the doctrine of Buddhism and the third is 10,000 years of decline and termination.

According to another version, the Buddhakalpa is a Mahakalpa in which one or more Buddhas appear. A period in which no Buddhas appears is a Shunyakalpa.

BUDDHAVAMSA

The 14th book of *Khuddaka-Nikaya* (Buddhist canonical texts), it contains in

verse, accounts of the lives of 25 Buddhas of whom the Sakyamuni is the last.

CHAITYA

A name for a Buddhist sanctuary. Also used for places that are sanctified by having played a role in the life of the Buddha. Eight such sacred places were listed – Lumbini, Bodhi Gaya, Varanasi, Jetavana, Kanya Kubja, Vaishali, Rajgriha and the sal grove at Kusinagara (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Buddhist Temples; Nature: Trees/Plants; Philosophy).

CHETIYA

Same as chaitya or sanctuary but used to denote an earthen mound, or stupa.

DHARANI

There are twelve goddesses with mystical powers in the Buddhist pantheon. They are depicted with two hands each holding different symbols like ears of corn, a jar of moonstones or buds of poisonous flowers. Collectively the Dharanis are known as Buddha Amogasiddhi.

The Dharanis are also understood to mean certain words that are memorized to acquire psychic powers.

DHARMA

One of the three jewels of the Buddhist 'Holy Triad' the other two being Buddha and Sangha. Of these, only Dharma is a goddess: Dharmakanya, the true reality.

DHARMAPALA

Lit. guardian of law. A kind of deity in Tibetan Lamaism, a Dharmapala is actually benevolent but is depicted as ferocious and hideous in order to instil terror in the evil spirits. The saint Padmasambhava (see Rimpoche Guru) conquered them in the 8th century and made them take an oath to protect the Buddhist faith. There are eight Dharmapalas – Beg-tse Brahma (or Sita Brahma), Hayagriva, Vaisravana (an epithet of Kubera, the Hindu god of wealth), Mahakala, Sridevi, Yama and Yamakanta (See Religion: Hinduism).

DHARMACHAKRA

The wheel of the law, signified by the hand of the Buddha in iconography. It signifies the unending cycle of suffering caused by births and deaths, which in turn are caused by desire. Only total suppression of desire can break this cycle (See Philosophy: Moksha).

DHYANA

In Pali, jnana. A school of Chinese Buddhist tradition which was conceived and modified by the Buddha to suit his disciples. He called aside his brightest student Mahakasyapa and revealed to him the me...

supreme of all truths. Mahakasyapa in turn transmitted this message to Ananda who was followed by 28 patriarchs, the last of them known as Bodhidharma.

The Bodhidharma explained that all living creatures possess one truth but they cannot realise it for they are obstructed by external factors. He therefore advised them to meditate by concentrating their thoughts in the belief that the self and other objects do not exist, while the holy and the unholy are identical.

He asked them to adhere to four practices – suffer all difficulties attributed to karma, be satisfied with what one possesses in joy and sorrow, surrender desire and act in conformity with dharma or truth and purity.

DIKPALA

Traditional guardians of the eight directions. In Buddhist mythology they appear in the Vajrayana pantheon. Some of them have feminine counterparts. Indra of the east rides his elephant Airavata, Yama of the south is astride a buffalo, Varuna of the west sits on a crocodile, Isana of the north has a bull and then there are Agni, Nairrti, and Vayu (See Hinduism – Concepts).

DIPA

Also called Dipatara; a deity of direction, one of the four goddesses of light in the Vajrayana pantheon (See Vajrayana). As a goddess of direction she figures along with Pushpa, Dhupa and Gandha. As a deity of light she is seen with Suryahasta, Ratnolka and Taditkara. She is mentioned in *Nisa-pannayogavali* (a Vajrayana text by Abhayakara Gupta) and *Sadhanamala* (a book on iconography).

EKAGRATA

Concentration. one of the five subdivisions of Dhyana – vitarka (cogitation), vichara (thought), priti (love or pleasure), sukha (happiness) and ekagrata (concentration. See Philosophy).

ESANA SUTTA

A collection of suttas (sutras or texts) on the three kinds of desire (esana) for carnal pleasures, intended as a guide to spiritual existence. They are mentioned in the Eightfold Path (Doctrine).

FA HSIEN

One of the most renowned Chinese Buddhist monks Fa Hsien or Fa Hien left China for India in 399 AD with several companions in search of authentic Buddhist canonical texts, especially the *Vinaya Pitaka*. He travelled widely in India and was all praise for the region of UP and north Bihar and its governance under Chandragupta II (376–

413 AD). Fa Hsien returned to China via Sri Lanka and Sumatra at the age of 79 after spending 14 years in India. He wrote extensively of his travels.

GANDHARVAS

Pali – Gandhabba. In Buddhist literature, the Gandharvas are depicted as semi-divine beings, the worst of the gods. However, there was also a belief that the Gandharvas granted boons and benefits if they were properly propitiated (See Performing Arts: Music).

GHANTAPANI

Name of one of the Dhyani-Bodhisattvas, he is an emanation of Vajrasattva who is regarded as the sixth Dhyani-Buddha. His attribute is a ghanta, bell.

GHOSITARAMA

A monastery in Kausambi, built by Ghosita, (also known as Ghosaka) a rich local merchant. The Buddha is believed to have stayed there and numerous incidents related to the place are mentioned in books.

GRIHAMATRIKA

One of the emanations of the Dhyani-Buddha Vairochana. She is depicted with three faces, white, yellow and red in colour. She has six arms and shows the Dharma-chakra mudra with her two principal hands. She carries the thunderbolt (vajra) and the arrow in her two right hands and in her two left hands the lotus (padma) and the bow (dhanush). She sits on a thousand-petalled lotus in the vajrasana pose.

GUHYASAMAJA TANTRA

The basic text of the Vajrayana form of Buddhism. Guhya means 'three': body, speech, mind; samaja means 'coming together.' The very basis of the Buddhist pantheon is laid down here including all the Dhyani-Buddhas, their consorts and the Dhyani-Bodhisattvas. The Tantra was composed in the third or fourth century, probably in northwest India. But it had to wait till the 8th century to gain popularity through the teachings and songs of the Buddhist Vajracharyas, which is why there are no references to the pantheon in contemporary Buddhist literature or in the writings of Chinese travellers of the period.

GUNABHADRA

A Buddhist monk of central India, he travelled to Sri Lanka and China, reaching Canton in 435 AD. He lived in Nanking till his death in 468 AD, having translated 76 Buddhist texts into Chinese.

GUNAMATI

A well-known, revered professor of Buddhist doctrine. He taught along with Sthira-

mati at the celebrated Nalanda monastery in Bihar (See Archaeology/Architecture: Old Cities; History: Chronology).

GUNAVARMAN

He belonged to the royal family of Kashmir. After taking to Buddhism he went to Sri Lanka and then Java where he converted the king and his mother to Buddhism and generally spread the religion. He was persuaded to travel to China. In 431 AD he reached Nanking where he lived in Chuan se (Jetavanavihara). He died the same year at the age of 65. Within that year he had translated 11 Sanskrit texts into Chinese.

GURURIMPOCHE

Lit. 'the precious teacher', a Tibetan honorific given to Padmasambhava who with Santaraksita established Lamaism, the Tibetan form of Buddhism in mid-8th century (See Rnin-ma-pa).

HAYAGRIVA

Lit. horse-headed. In Tibetan Buddhism, he is a Dharmapala, and in China and Japan the 'horse-headed one' is seen as one of the fierce aspects of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who has special authority in the realm of animals.

HARITI

A demoness who devoured children. The Buddha hid the youngest of her 500 children under his begging bowl and thus made her realize the sorrow she was causing other parents. She repented and became a nun and a protector of children. In Japan she is known as Kishinmijin and is regarded as a guardian of children and of women in childbirth. A number of temples have been consecrated to her.

JATAKA TALES

A set of 547 stories, all relating to the previous births of the Buddha when he was a Bodhisattva (aspirant to Buddhahood). The stories were originally in the Pali work, *Jatakavannana*. The collection is said to have been taken from other Buddhist scriptures to Sri Lanka from India by Prince Mahendra, son of Ashoka the Mauryan ruler (3rd century BC) and were translated in Sinhalese. Scenes from the *Jatakas* are depicted in the stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi (See Archaeology/Architecture; Literature: Pali).

A *Jataka* story has three parts, the first, Pratyutpannavastu or the present episode is the introductory section; the second, Atitavastu, the past story is the main part, for here the Buddha relates stories of his previous births. The third part is the Samavadhana, an identification of the charac-



Dharmachakra or prayer wheel

ters mentioned with the Buddha and his contemporaries in previous births. The stories are in archaic Pali verse form.

KARANDA VYUHA

A Mahayana text, its full title is *Avalokitesvara-guna-karanda-vyuha*, the detailed description of the qualities of Avalokitesvara. It is in both prose and verse.

KHUDDAKA NIKAYA

Canonical books, forming the fifth and last section of the *Sutta Pitaka* (Basket Discourses). It consists of 15 independent treatises mostly in verse, which include the *Khuddapatha*, *Dhammapadha*, *Udana*, *Itivuttaka*, *Therigatha*, *Jataka*, *Mahanidessa*, *Chullanddesa*, *Patisambhidamagga*, *Apadana*, *Buddhavamsa* and *Chariyapitaka*.

LALIT VISTARA

A biography of the Buddha written in the 1st century AD in both prose and verse. Asvaghosa's epic, *Buddhacharita*, is supposedly based on this biography.

RNIN-MA-PA

The first Buddhist sect of Tibet. It was established by Padmasambhava in the 8th century. They combine many of the old practices of the Bon religion with Vajrayana practices and worship both benign and demoniacal deities. They wear red caps to distinguish themselves from the Bon sect (who wear black). In time, the sect degenerated, which led to several break-away groups and reform sects.

SADHANAMALA

Lit. 'Garland of Realization'. A book on Buddhist iconography, it contains 300 sahanas – instructions on how the images of the various deities are to be visualized and the appropriate mantras for each. It is believed to have been composed between the 5th and 11th centuries by a number of writers.

SUTTA PITAKA

Lit. basket of discourses. It forms the second part of the Pali canonical text *Tipitaka* (*Tripitaka*), the other two being *Vinaya Pitaka* and *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. The *Sutta Pitaka* gives the basic law and doctrine of Hinayana Buddhism.

TIPITAKA/TRIPITAKA

Lit. three baskets. The complete canon of the Theravada School of Buddhism. It has three sections, *Vinaya Pitaka*, basket of discipline, *Sutra Pitaka* (in Pali, *Sutta Pitaka*) basket of discourses and *Abhidharma Pitaka* (in Pali, *Abhidhamma Pitaka*) basket of special doctrine.

TRIRATNA

The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha together known as the three jewels or tri-ratna. As a sculptural motif, it is found in Buddhist monuments in the form of a trident. In Buddhist congregations, the concept becomes a sonorous chant: *Buddham charanam gacchami, Dharmam charanam gacchami, Sangham charanam gacchami* (I surrender myself to the Buddha, to Dharma and to the Sangha). The jewel as a mystic symbol is also found in the chant that accompanies the turning of a Buddhist prayer wheel: *Om mani padme ham*, Hail to the jewel in the lotus.

UPASAKA

A lay Buddhist worshipper who has surrendered himself to the three jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. He worships the relics of the Buddha, observes the precepts of ethical behaviour and reveres the monks. The female worshipper is called an upasika. She believes in the Buddhist creed but not in the monks.

VAJRASATTVA

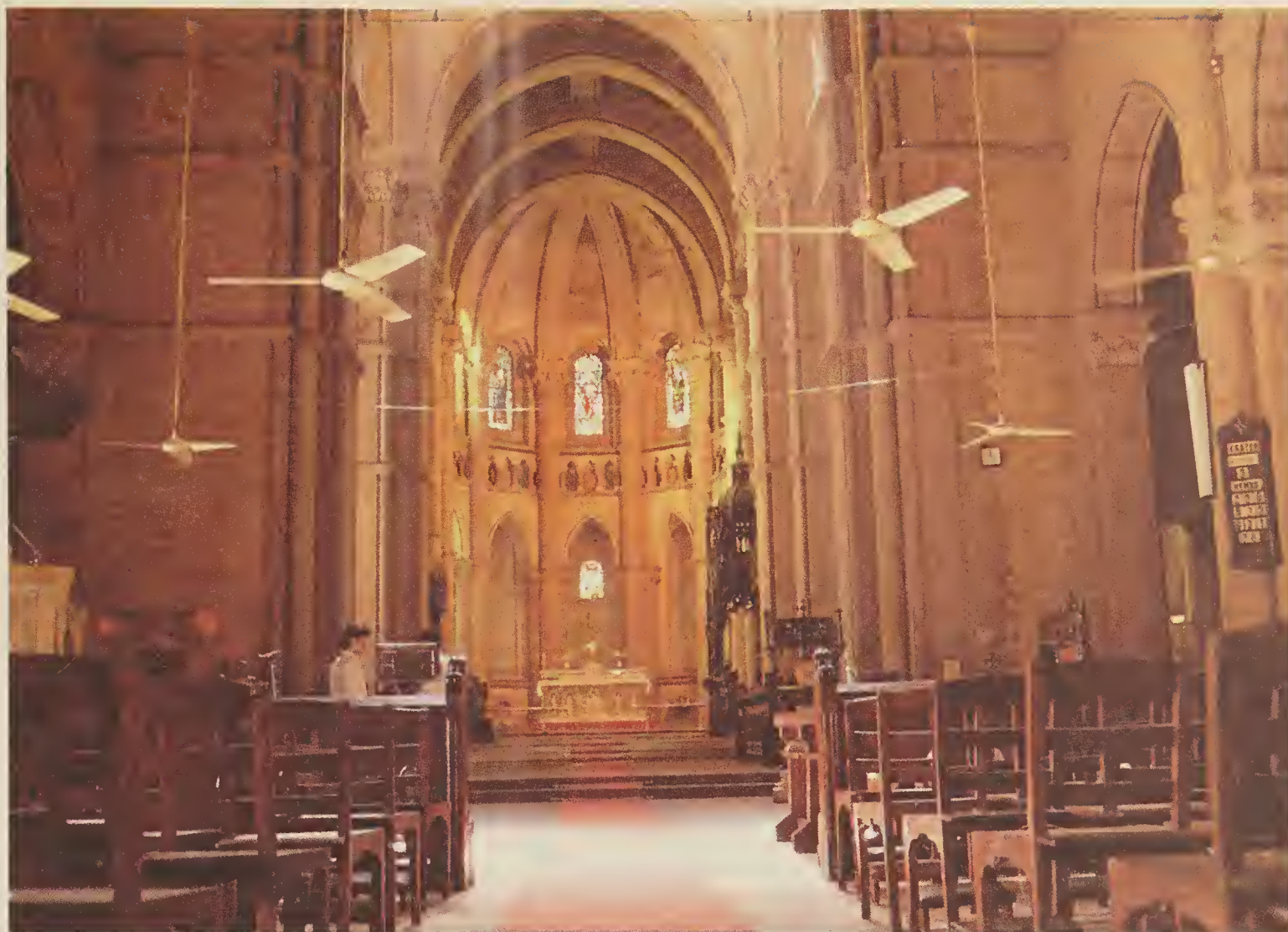
Called Kongo-bosatsu in Japan. He is a Mahayana god who is also regarded as the sixth Dhyani-Buddha and the priest of the other five Dhyani-Buddhas.

VAJRAYANA

From Sanskrit vajra or diamond. Lit. 'the diamond vehicle'. It is the name given to the tantrik form of Buddhism. It developed from the Yogachara School in Tibet and neighbouring countries. The principle of Vajrayana is that Buddhahood is not merely a realisation of a wider vision but also a physical phenomenon. Buddhahood can be realised in one's lifetime through various practices.

VISUDDHIMAGGA

An encyclopaedic work on Buddhist doctrine by Buddhaghosa. Its three parts deal with conduct, concentration and wisdom.



All Saints Cathedral, Allababad

CHRISTIANITY

India has an estimated 18 million Christians. There have been Christian communities in Kerala almost since the founding of the religion, for St. Thomas the Apostle is supposed to have arrived here in 54 AD. The Portuguese left a large Christian population in Goa. And in the two north-eastern states Mizoram and Nagaland, Christians form a majority of the population.

JESUS CHRIST

Christianity derives its name from Jesus Christ who was born to Mary and Joseph, a carpenter. Born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth, a small town of Galilee, Jesus spoke directly to the people in the manner of a prophet. He preached the message of love and compassion which his disciples propagated after his death. But the priests

and politicians, fearing his power over people, decided to do away with him. In the last few hours before his death, he broke bread with his disciples, washing their feet.

Betrayed by his disciple Judas Iscariot, he was captured and nailed to the cross along with two criminals. Three days after his death, his disciples saw him alive, glorious and victorious. A visit to his tomb showed that his body had disappeared. He had been resurrected from the dead. The 'Resurrection' or 'arising-to-life' of Jesus is the basis for the whole of the Christian religion and its history.

The western calendar is dated from approximately around the time of Christ's death.

THE BIBLE

The *Bible* or the Holy Scripture is what all Christians follow, irrespective of their denominations. The *Bible* is not a 'book' in the strictest sense of the term but a collection of 73 writings dating from about 9th century BC to the end of the 1st century AD. These writings are divided into two main

sections: the *Old Testament* which corresponds to the *Bible* of Judaism and the *New Testament* based exclusively on the teachings of Christ.

THE CHURCH

In a narrow sense, the place of worship but in a larger sense, an institution of service to humanity. The educational, social, medical and religious services of the Church are extended to all communities all over the world.

There are several denominations of the Christian Church, chief of which are the Catholic and Anglican. The Catholic Church acknowledges the Pope at the Vatican as its head.

In India, since Christians are essentially converts, rituals of the original faith are integrated into the Christian ceremonies. For example, many Christians wear the mangalsutra as a symbol of marriage (See Hinduism : Samskaras).



Narasimha at Hampi

HINDUISM

The 3,000-year-old living faith of 80% of the world's largest democracy, Hinduism is traditionally defined as 'a way of life and not a religion.' It is called 'Sanatana Dharma', the Eternal Law and there is neither dogma nor conversion. It allows the individual to define God as best as he or she is able, both as Nirgun (formless) and Sagun (as a specific deity). It has periodically reformed itself and its truest characteristic is its mental fearlessness of other religions.

Concepts

ACHARA

Lit. rule, custom, usage; rules of practice for castes, orders or religious institutions.

ACHARYA

A spiritual teacher or guide. Also a name for Dronacharya, the Pandava guru and Shankaracharya, the proponent of Advaita philosophy.

ADHWARYU

A priest who recites the prayers of the *Yajur Veda*.

ADITI

The 'free, unbounded' infinity. Personified as Deva-matri, the mother of the gods – Vishnu, the Adityas and Martanda, the Sun – according to the *Rig Veda* and *Yajur Veda*. The *Matsya Purana* tells of a pair of fabulous earrings produced at the churning of the Ocean of Milk (Kshirasagara Manthana) which Indra presented to Aditi. Several *Puranas* relate how these earrings were stolen by the asura, Naraka, and were restored by Krishna. Devaki, mother of Krishna, is held to be a manifestation of Aditi.

ADVAITA VEDANTA

'Non-duality' the most important and influential aspect of the Vedanta school of philosophy (See Philosophy). The Advaita strain believes there is a definite identity between the ultimate reality and atman (self). Advaita Vedanta was first systematized by Gaudapada in the 7th century in his *Mandukya Karika*, a commentary on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. The writer argued that non-duality is the final truth, but this final truth is concealed by maya or illusion (ignorance). Shankaracharya gave the final shape to the philosophy. He said

only the Brahman (man) is real and the rest of the world is unreal. Any duality or plurality is an illusion or maya (See Sages and Saints: Shankaracharya).

AKHYANA

Ancient story, legend or myth. The oldest surviving akhyanas are said to be found in the *Rig Veda*. There are about 20 of them composed in verse and dialogue form. It is believed that from the narrative element in the akhyana evolved the dramatic dialogues of the drama proper. A class of akhyana writers were known as 'Akhyana Vidas.' Many of the ancient akhyanas have come down to us through professional storytellers like the sutradhars and kathaks down the ages (See Myths and Legends).

ANANDA

Pure bliss, happiness or joy. According to the *Upanishads* (See Religious Texts) everybody is created out of ananda, everyone lives for ananda and ultimately all things merge into ananda.

ARYAN

A linguistic term derived from the Sanskrit 'Arya,' the name by which the Rig Vedic people called themselves. 'Iranian' is a variant of Aryan.

ARYAVARTA

'Land of Aryas.' The *Manusmriti* defines all the land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya and from sea to sea as Aryavarta.

ASHIRVADA

The widely accepted practice of seeking the blessing of elders is known as ashirvada. Before embarking on any venture or during a festival or ceremony, a younger person will prostrate before or touch the feet of elders, the guru (teacher) or deity and seek their ashirvada.

ASHRAMA

The life of a person is divided into four stages known as Ashramas – Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha, Sanyasa. In the first stage as a Brahmacharya, the person is expected to live as a celibate (See Philosophy: Samkhya). As a Grihasta, he is a married householder. In Vanaprastha he gives up all material pleasures and goes to the forest to become a hermit. Finally when he is fully detached from all things worldly, he enters the Sanyasa phase.

ATITHI

Lit. a guest. Atithi dharma or worship of the guest deems it a duty on the part of the householder to welcome and entertain any person who arrives at his doorstep. Stories are legion about gods, who having donned human disguise arrived as atithis at the

door of their devotees to test them.

AVIDYA

A philosophical term meaning ignorance or living with illusions or 'maya' (See Philosophy).

BAUL

Bauls are a religious sect of Bengal who trace their origin to Chaitanya, the mystic saint of the region (See Sages and Saints). Their belief is in a universal god with whom they aim to be united. Like their founder, the Bauls are great singers who carry the *ektara* (simple one-stringed musical instrument) with them and sing with great devotion as wandering minstrels.

BHAGAVAN

People with six exemplary qualities – aishvarya (superhuman powers); dharma (morality); yasha (success); shri (riches); jnana (knowledge); and vairagya (detachment from worldly things). The qualities are collectively known as Bhaga and 'Bhagavan' is a prefix for deities as well as for religious founders. The devotees of Vishnu and his incarnation of Krishna, came to be known as Bhagavata and their religion as Bhagavata Dharma.

BHAKTI

Selfless, intense, devotion to God is bhakti. There are many paths to God-realisation like karma, jnana and yoga but bhakti is regarded as the best for it is uncomplicated and calls for no rituals or sacrifices.

BHARATAVARSHA

India, the kingdom of the legendary Bharata, grandson of Rishi Vishwamitra and son of Shakuntala (See Literature: Sanskrit). It is divided into khandas or parts like, Indradwipa, Kascrumat, Tamravarna, Gabhastimat, Nagadwipa, Saumya, Gandharva, Varuna. The ancient definition *Bharata Varshe, Jambu-dwipe* still endures: in Sri Lanka, India is still called Dambadiva.

BHIKSHA

Charity or alms are known as 'bhiksha.' According to the scriptures, when man gave up all his worldly possessions and ties and lived the life of an ascetic, his basic needs like food had to come from bhiksha. The act of charity was considered most pious and of great merit to the giver. In fact after the Upanayana or thread ceremony (See Samskaras) a Brahmacharya was supposed to live on grain given as bhiksha.

BHUTA WORSHIP

'Bhuta' is a spirit or ghost. There are a number of shrines all over the country where spirits (of dead horses, animals and serpents) are worshipped. Each bhuta has a



Baul singers

story behind it and is described in songs known as 'Paadana.'

CHAKRAS

It is believed that there are six invisible chakras or centres of force within the human body which, through yoga, may be activated for eternal bliss.

CREATION

Varying accounts exist in the *Vedas* and *Puranas* of Creation. The earliest speculation is in the *Rig Veda's* creation hymn which concluded that only god knew how the world came into being. But the *Purusha Shukta* of the *Rig Veda* says the Spirit (Purusha) who personified a part of himself as Viraj created the *Vedas*, the gods, the asuras and men.

The *Satapata Brahmana* says that Prajapati, the 'all-Father,' first said 'Bhuh' and created earth, 'Bhuvah,' and created air, and 'Svah,' and made the sky out of the primeval waters. Then, repeating the process, he created himself as Manu, then offspring, then animals.

There are other accounts notably by Manu and in the *Vishnu Purana*, minute details are given. Basically, Brahmana the creator (Prajapati of the *Vedas*) caused creation through the interaction of four

forms of himself – Prakriti or Pradana which is primary or crude matter, Purusha or the Spirit, Vyakta or visible substance and Kala or time.

Creation concluded with the churning of the Ocean of Milk when the gods attained amrita, the nectar of immortality (See *Kshirasagara Manthana*).

DAITYA

Also known as asuras or danavas, these are the demonic beings opposed to the gods or devas. They represent evil forces and are forever pitted against good. A number of myths and legends are based on the deva-daitya or god-demon conflicts with the devas triumphing in the end, the best-known being the story of the churning of the Ocean of Milk.

DAIVA

Fate or destiny. While individual efforts are not undermined by the scriptures, there is an emphasis on the role played by fate. According to *Matsya Purana* (See *Puranas*) daiva is nothing but the karma (action) of previous births.

DAKSHINA

The fee given to a Brahmin for performing a religious ritual. 'Suvarna dakshina' denotes

a fee paid in gold and is of course the highest form of dakshina.

DANA

The act of gifting away a part of one's wealth to the needy Brahmin, religious institution, sage or temple, regarded as a great virtue both by religion as well as by society. The *Kurma Purana* (See *Puranas*) mentions four kinds of dana: nitya dana – that which is made every day on a small scale; naimillaka dana – made on certain religious occasions as during grahana (eclipse); kamya dana – made with an end in view like the desire for offspring, wealth or victory and vimala dana – that which is made purely as a selfless act. The *Rig Veda* sings the praise of dana. Annadana (rice offering) and Vidya dana (gift of knowledge) are regarded as most significant. Each kind of dana brings its own reward, for instance, it is believed that giving gold ensures long life, silver brings beauty and so on. Karna in the *Mahabharata* is considered the greatest dana 'giver' – he is called 'Dana shura,' since he parted with objects that were essential for him to sustain life when Indra asked for them.

DARSHAN

Lit. to see, but in general means an 'auspicious or holy sighting' of a deity, temple, holy rivers, religious man and so on. In most temples, people throng before the deity for an early morning 'darshan' of God.

DASHAVATARA

The ten incarnations of Vishnu are a perennial theme for Indian theatre, dance and music, both classical and folk and a rich source of symbol and metaphor in all regional literature (See Performing Arts). They are also frequently depicted in craft – in stone, wood, ceramic, cloth and in calendar art. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (*Mahabharata*), Krishna tells Arjuna, in a deep pause before the battle begins:

*Paritranaaya Sadhunam, Vinashaayaascha Dushkrutam,
Dharma Samsthapanathaya, Sambhavamami Yuge Yuge.*

(To protect the good, destroy the wicked, establish Dharma or right conduct on earth, I shall be born from age to age).

Matsya: The first of the ten incarnations or avatars of Vishnu. Vishnu told Vaivaswata Manu that a great flood was approaching and asked him to collect all kinds of animals, seeds and plants in a large boat. During the flood, Vishnu appeared as a huge fish and Manu tied the ship to its horn and the ship was dragged to a safe place. In the

Mahabharata, the fish was Brahma.

Kurma: The tortoise; an avatar taken when the gods, (devas or suras), were under threat of domination by the demons (asuras). When the devas appealed for help to Vishnu, they were advised to churn the Ocean of Milk to procure amrita, or nectar of immortality to strengthen them. The devas arranged with the asuras to help in the churning. Vishnu assumed the form of Kurma or the tortoise to provide a stable base for Mount Mandara that was used as the 'stick' for the churning (See Kshirasagara Manthana).

Varaha: First mentioned in the *Vedas* as an act of Brahma, who, becoming wind, moved on the primeval water and then becoming a boar, raised the world aloft. But in the *Vishnu Purana*, it was Vishnu in the form of Brahma who became a boar and saved earth from drowning in the deep. Another variation of the story is that the demon Hiranyaksha seized the world and Varaha fought him and saved the earth.

Narasimha: Lit. 'man-lion,' Vishnu's fourth avatar. Hiranyaksha, the demon, killed by the previous Varahavatara had a brother named Hiranyakashipu who rejoiced in a boon from Brahma that neither man nor beast could harm him on earth or in the air, by night or day, within or outside his home. Thus secure, the demon proceeded to terrorize all around him, including his son Prahlada, a staunch follower of Vishnu. Repeated attempts to kill Prahlada failed (See Festivals : Holi). Greatly angered, Vishnu assumed the terrifying form of Narasimha at twilight, seized the demon and standing on the threshold, he placed Hiranyakashipu across his thighs and tore apart his belly. Thus earth was rid of another evil demon.

Vamana: The dwarf avatar or incarnation taken to recover heaven for the gods. Bali, grandson of Prahlada (See Narasimhavatara) became king of the three worlds, displacing even Indra from his capital, Amaravati. But since an asura could not be allowed to rule devaloka, Vishnu in the guise of a dwarf Brahmin appeared at the great sacrifice Bali was conducting and asked for a boon. The king, bound by traditions of hospitality could not refuse and granted Vamana the dwarf, the three steps of land he asked for. With the first stride, Vishnu covered heaven, with the second, he bestrode all earth. Stunned, Bali offered his own head for the third step to be completed. Thus the gods regained their realm. Bali, consecrated by the touch of Vishnu's foot (hence called 'Mahabali,'

or the great Bali) retired to the netherworld. In Kerala the Onam festival in September celebrates his annual visit to earth to observe the welfare of his former subjects. (See Festivals, Onam).

Parashurama: Rama-of-the-axe, an incarnation or avatar taken to exterminate the Kshatriya or warrior caste which tried to assert its authority over the Brahmins. The story seems to indicate a time when the two castes struggled for supremacy. Parashurama's is the first avatar that takes a human form on earth.

Legend goes that a king, Karttaveerya Arjuna of the Haihaya tribe, whose capital was Mahishmati on the Narmada, became vain and oppressive. He insulted Jamadagni, the father of Parashurama (See Lesser Deities – Bhrgu) and was killed by Parashurama in single combat. His sons killed Jamadagni in revenge and thereafter it became Parashurama's mission to destroy the entire race of Kshatriyas (warriors). Legend goes that Parashurama later threw his bloodied axe into the sea and the land dredged up became the Malabar coast.

Though Parashurama turns up again both in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* independent of Vishnu's 6th and 7th avatars as Rama and Krishna, he is principally remembered for the episode in which, to obey his father's irrational command, he decapitated his mother Renuka whose 'sin' was that she had wistfully watched an amorous Gandharva couple by the river in which she bathed. For his unquestioning obedience, Parashurama was rewarded with a boon. He asked for his mother to be revived.

Rama or Ramachandra: Lit. 'one who delights.' Along with Krishnavatara, it is the most popular incarnation, even today. Rama's reign was supposedly so splendid and just that ever after, utopian periods were called 'Ramarajya' or a glorious reign by Rama (See Epics – Ramayana; Festivals Ram Navami, Navaratri; Performing Arts: Dance, Music, Theatre.)

Krishna: Lit. 'the dark one,' refers to Krishna's dark complexion. A popular description is 'Neela Megha Shareera' which means 'body like a bluish cloud,' and he is the most human and endearing of the avatars. The *Bhagvata* and *Vishnu Purana*, give details of the Krishna Avatar and in the *Mahabharata* he plays a crucial role.

Kansa, the king of Mathura gave his beloved sister Devaki in marriage to a clansman, Vasudeva. As he escorted them home after the wedding a disembodied voice proclaimed his doom at the hands of

their eighth child. Kansa promptly imprisoned the pair in a dungeon. When each child was born to Devaki, he killed it. But when the eighth was due, a strange slumber seized the guards and when a boy was born, Vasudeva was told by heavenly voices to take the baby out, ford the Yamuna, hand over the baby to a Yadava cowherd, Nanda, at Brindavan and to bring back his wife Yashoda's newborn girl instead. All this was done. When Kansa seized the baby girl she flew through his grasp and was revealed as Yogmaya (the spirit of Shakti). Enraged, Kansa sent his asuras to kill all newborns.

Meanwhile Krishna was raised in a rural idyll, successfully foiling various attempts on his life and sporting with the milkmaids especially Radha. He left Brindavan for Mathura with his half-brother Balarama in response to a wrestling challenge from Kansa's court and killed the tyrant, restoring Kansa's imprisoned father, Ugrasena to his throne. Thereafter Krishna's life became increasingly caught up in the affairs of his cousins, the Pandavas and Kauravas. He moved his clan to Dwaraka on the Gujarat coast, married two beautiful princesses, Rukmini and Satyabhama (See Performing Arts: Dance – Kuchipudi, Manipuri). Finally, caught up in the vortex of the *Mahabharata* war, he fulfilled the purpose of his incarnation which was to reveal the sacred *Bhagavad Gita*, the most sacred Hindu scripture of all, to Arjuna.

Krishna's popular names of Krishna are Giridhari or Goverdhandhari, Govinda, Gopala – the cowherd, Gopinath, lord of the milkmaids, Shyama – the dark one, Nandalal – Nanda's darling, Devaki Nandan – Devaki's joy. Krishna's life and deeds (*Krishnalila*) along with Rama's are a major theme in traditional Indian theatre, music, dance, painting and sculpture (See Performing Arts: Music – Ashtapadis, Theatre, Festivals: Janmashtami)

Balarama: Lit. Rama-the-strong. By some accounts of the Dashavatara, this is Vishnu's eighth incarnation, after Krishna, but generally it is believed that Balarama was the accompanying incarnation of the serpent Sesha (Adishesha or Ananta) on whom Vishnu reclines during the intervals of creation. Balarama too was brought up by Nanda and Yashoda. He was second only to Krishna in strength and miraculous power and accounted for the destruction of many demons himself. His 'weapon' was a ploughshare and so he is called Halayudha (whose weapon is a plough). Balarama married Revati. When his avatar was over, Sesha simply crawled out of his

mouth and returned to Vaikuntha.

Buddha: The 'Enlightened One,' this incarnation is originally foreign to the Dashavatara and is briefly alluded to in the *Bhagvata Purana* where it says that at the start of Kaliyuga, Vishnu will incarnate as the Buddha. Both Hinduism and Buddhism share the doctrine of transmigration of souls and the concept of karma or paying in the afterlife for one's conduct in the previous birth (See Buddhism).

Kalki: The last, hoped-for incarnation of Vishnu who will come to restore a time of universal goodness, peace and prosperity at the end of the present age of strife and evil (Kaliyuga) which commenced with the death of Krishna. Kalki is described as a fair man riding a white horse, with a sword in his hand (See Vishnu).

DEVALAYA

Lit. the house of God or temple. Temple institutions greatly influenced the social, cultural and academic life of society especially during and after the medieval era.

DEVATA

A divine being or deity. The female deity is a Devi. There are a number of Devatas and Devis in the Hindu pantheon (See Vedic Gods, Puranic Gods).

DHRUVA

The Pole Star, named for a steadfast young prince who worshipped Vishnu ardently for many years, after being rejected by his father.

DHYANA

Deep, profound meditation to the extent that one forgets all other things around. One of the spiritual results of dhyana is the awakening of the 'kundalini' or inner energy to a state of bliss.

DURBHA

Dried grass used in most important rituals. There are hymns glorifying the durbha in the *Atharva Veda*. When a twist of durbha is worn on the finger like a ring, it is believed to prolong life.

DVAITA

Lit. dual. The dualist school of Vedanta whose chief exponent was the 13th century philosopher Madhavacharya (See Sages and Saints) whose teaching is in total contrast to the doctrine of Shankaracharya (See Advaita) who preached non-dualism. According to the Dvaita doctrine, God, souls and inanimate nature are three eternal orders. God is the efficient cause but not the material cause of the universe. God is self-dependent whereas the other two orders are not. They are subject to change and

control by God. The Dvaita philosophy (See Philosophy) has been most popular in the south especially with the Vaishnavas.

DIPA/DEEPA

Denotes both a lamp as well as a person who sheds his illumination on others. The lamp (also called 'diya') has great significance for Hindus. It is auspicious to light the deepa or diya in homes at sunset (before the other lights came on). There is invariably an oil-lit lamp before the deities in a home and of course in temples. At holy places like Hardwar, for instance, hundreds of tiny diyas of clay are filled with oil, lit and floated down the Ganga on festive days. Around Kerala temples, thousands of tiered lamps skirt the walls.

GANIKA

A courtesan accomplished in the 64 arts. A ganika is both beautiful and learned, is honoured by the king and loved and desired by all men. In ancient times the ganika was also referred to as Nagarasri or 'Pride of the city.' Buddhist literature extols the beauty and learning of the well-known ganika, Amrapali.

GAYATRI

A mystic mantra or incantation addressed to the Sun god in the *Rig Veda*, with specific times for chanting it – morning, noon and evening. It is mandatory for all males to recite the Gayatri after the Upanayana or thread ceremony (See Samskaras).

GUNA

A basic, fundamental quality. According to the Samkhya school of philosophy the three fundamental qualities in man are sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is illumination or knowledge, tamas is the exact opposite – darkness and ignorance. Rajas is an amalgam of sattva and tamas. Everyone in the world is made up of these three gunas with the proportion differing in each case.

GURU

A teacher, a spiritual parent or preceptor who instructs a student in various shastras or sciences. *Mata, Pita, Guru Deivam*, goes the dictum which means that the guru is next only to the parents in the hierarchy of reverence. From the guru evolved the institution of 'gurukul' or ashrama where the student lived with the guru and received instructions in the scriptures.

INDRIYA

Sensory organs – skin (twaj), eyes (chakshu), ears (srotra), tongue (jivha), and nose (ghrana) are considered 'indriyas' and through them we become aware. Touch (sparsha), form (rupa), sound (shabda), flavour (rasa), and smell (gandha) organs

are 'bahirindriyas' or external sensory organs. 'Mana' or the mind is considered the internal organ – 'antarindriya' and this experiences pain and pleasure (dukha, sukha) which are of an internal nature. According to Samkhya philosophy there are the organs of knowledge (dhyandriya); in addition there are the five senses of action – the mouth, hand, legs, arms and the procreative organs known as kamendriya. Conquering of indriyas (indriya-vijaya) is a basic to sadhana or penance (See Philosophy: Samkhya).

ISHWARA

Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omniprinciple, that is God. The concept takes different shades of meaning with different schools of thought. Parameshwara, the supreme one and Ishwara are common epithets of Shiva. The popular belief is that Ishwara controls everything in this universe. He can be worshipped in his formless principle (Nirgun) or in one of his many forms (Sagun). Ishwara is also a general term for god.

ITIHASA

History or literally broken up to *iti-ba-asa*, it means 'so indeed it was'. The religious text *Satapata Brahmana* holds that 'itihasa' is the *Veda*. The book goes on to say that one who studies Itihasa, as good as satisfies the gods with honey and offerings. Itihasa used to be recited by experts even in Vedic times during rituals and these experts were called 'aitihasikas.'

JAATI

The very many castes that comprise Hindu society are known as 'jaatis.' It is a kind of social group and marriages are conducted within these groups. Each of these jaatis has its own customs, traditions and beliefs. These jaatis fall into a structured hierarchy.

JAPA

A repeated incantation or mantra is called a 'japa' or 'japam.' If it is rendered audibly it is known as 'vachika japa'; a gentle lip movement is 'upanshujapa,' and when it is a sheer mental exercise it is called 'manasa japa.' The number of times that certain mantras should be repeated are prescribed – 108 and 1,001 are two auspicious numbers. Very often a 'mala of rudraksha' (a rosary made with large seeds) of 108 beads is used to facilitate counting, thus the name 'japamala'.

KAL

Time, a powerful entity. The *Mahabharata* describes Kal as the root of all things. It is a seed that creates the world, it also destroys it. There is not a single being that does not

come under its power. Yama the presiding god of death is also referred to as Kal.

KALPAVRIKSHA

The mythical wish-fulfilling tree which is said to have emerged from the sea when it was churned by the gods and demons (See Kshirasagara Manthana). Apart from sweet fruits the tree is supposed to produce ornaments, clothes, wine, milk of six varieties and beautiful girls and temples. Kalpavriksha is a frequent image in sculpture and Kalpavalli is the personification of the tree – the wish fulfiller.

KAMAKHYA

A well-known tantrik deity whose temple is on the Nilachal hill near Guwahati. The Kamakhya cult is an ancient one. It is said that King Narakasura (See Festivals: Hindu – Deepavali) wanted to marry her but she thwarted his efforts. Kamakhya is worshipped as a Shakti Pitha or centre of the Shakti cult.

KAPALIKA

Kapal is the human skull. Kapaleeswara is a name for Shiva who inhabits the cremation ground and uses a skull for a begging bowl. A Kapalika is one who worships Shiva in this form (See Holy Places: Temples – Kapaleeswara).

KARMA

A person's mental and physical action is known as Karma. No one can escape the consequences of Karma. Karma should be performed without aspiring for results (phala). Snapping desire therefore amounts to liberating oneself. In Hindu philosophy, Karma plays a major role and with it are linked concepts of heaven and hell and the idea of rebirth (See Markandeya Purana; Philosophy).

KINNARA

Minor divinities supposed to be extremely fond of music. They are depicted in literature and in sculpture as half-human and half-animal or bird. They are extremely graceful creatures that move in couples and dance well.

KSHIRASAGARA MANTHANA

The churning of the Ocean of Milk is a watershed in Hindu mythology. Done to dredge up 'amrita,' the nectar of immortality from its depths, the churners were the gods (devas or suras) and the demons (asuras) who were fighting for supremacy. They used an obliging mountain, Mandara, for a stick and the serpent Vasuki for a rope, while Vishnu himself assumed his second avatar, the tortoise (Kurma) as the pivot for Mandara. Since the asuras held the hood end of Vasuki and the devas the tail, the asu-

ras were soon exhausted by the gusts of poisonous air issuing from the serpent, strained by churning, while clouds driven by his breath towards his tail showered on the devas and refreshed them. Several treasures were yielded from the Milk Ocean. First came Surabhi, the sacred cow whose milk flowed endlessly, followed by Varuni, goddess of wine, who became the consort of Varuna, god of the Ocean. Then from a whirlpool, sprang the Parijata, tree of paradise that Indra appropriated for his garden, along with the celestial dancers (apsaras) who came forth next, as well as Airavata, the wonder elephant and Uchaisravas the team of wonder horses.

The moon emerged from the sea and Shiva seized it to wear in his hair. Then there emanated a fierce and terrible poison that threatened to destroy the universe. Shiva drank it to save the world but, goes the legend, a scared Parvati seized his neck to stop him from swallowing it and so Shiva's neck was stained blue (Neelakantha). Then Lakshmi emerged, seated on a lotus, and with her, robed in white, came Dhanvantari, physician of the gods (See: Festival, Dhanteras), holding aloft a kalasha (pot) of amrita. The devas and asuras fell to fighting over it and the asuras seized the precious kalasha. Vishnu assumed the guise of Mohini the enchantress to cajole the asuras into parting with the goblet which she then gave to the devas. But two asuras, Rahu and Ketu, disguised as snakes, managed to lap a few spilt drops. Chandra the moon spotted them and told the gods, for which Rahu and Ketu 'devour' his light, hence the waning of the moon and lunar eclipses.

KUMARI

A virgin, considered very pure and auspicious. Referred to as 'kanya' she is worshipped as Devi incarnate.

KUNDALINI

An energy seen as a serpent lying dormant in the muladhara which is at the base of the vertebral column. Yogic practices and spiritual exercises are supposed to awaken the Kundalini which then moves upwards penetrating the various chakras (centres of force within the human body) till it finally reaches the Sahasradhar chakra located in the head. When this serpentine energy reaches the final destination the person is supposed to experience eternal bliss (See Chakras).

LOKAPALA

The eight mythological deities presiding over eight directions are known as 'Dik' or Lokapalas. They are Indra (east), Yama

(south), Varuna (west), Kubera (north), Agni (south-east), Niruti (south-west), Vayu (north-west) and Isha (north-east). See Buddhism: Dikpala)

LOKAYATIKA

A cult of non-believers. The *Kamasutra* expounds the philosophy according to which religious ordinances should not be observed. There are precepts like "It is better to have a pigeon today than a peacock tomorrow," or "A copper coin in hand is worth more than hopes of possessing a gold coin."

MANASA

A serpent goddess worshipped mainly in the eastern regions. There are a number of myths built around Manasa including the most famous folk tale, Chand-Behula. Having incurred Manasa's displeasure, Chand dies but Behula with single-minded devotion wins over the goddess and revives her husband. Manasa is believed to be the wife of Sage Jaratkaru and mother of Rishi Astika who saved the race of serpents from being sacrificed in the Sarpa Sastra Yajna of Janamejaya (See Myths and Legends).

MANTRA

Sacred formula, mystical verse or syllables addressed to any deity to acquire supernatural powers. There are a number of mantras each one promising a different result. The science of mantra is known as mantra-shastra. Mantras are used greatly in Tantra, thus the term tantra-mantra.

MAYA

An all-pervading power of illusion which obstructs perception of reality of being. The world is created of maya hence it is illusory. In order to reach the divine essence, Brahma, one should be able to penetrate the illusion. In Vedic literature the word Maya is used to denote super-human magical force. Mayasura was an asura architect who mastered the science of magic. Among other things he created the Maya Sabha for the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*, full of optical miracles and illusions. It was here that Duryodhana slipped, fell and was laughed at by Draupadi. Duryodhana was incensed and vowed revenge through the game of dice (See Epics-Mahabharata; Philosophy: Samkhya)

MITHUNA

A male-female couple. Most of the medieval temples especially the ones in Orissa and Khajuraho are adorned with erotic sculptures of the Mithuna couple.

MOKSHA

The final liberation of the soul from the bondage of the body. Man has to go

through cycles of births and deaths before he is able to shed his shroud of ignorance and aspire to the divine soul or Paramatma. Liberation from the shackles of worldly life and from the cycle of life and birth itself is moksha (See Philosophy).

MUHURTA

An auspicious time fixed for carrying out an important event after astrological calculations. It is believed that anything carried out during muhurta will be completed successfully and satisfactorily.

MURTI

Lit. concrete, visible form. The replica of any object in concrete stone, metal or wood. The word 'murti' is generally associated with objects of worship like figures of gods and goddesses from the Hindu pantheon. Thus murti-puja means idol worship; and murti-shastra is the science of making sacred images.

NARAKA

Hell. It is believed that after death a sinful person goes into a dark region to receive punishment for his evil deeds. When a person's life span on earth is over, Chitragupta, the assistant to Yama (god of death) brings the soul to him. Evaluating his good and bad deeds Yama sends him to heaven or hell (naraka). To suffer punishment in hell the soul is given another body called 'yatan-deha.' There are several narakas. Depending upon the severity of the sins committed, the soul is sent to the appropriate naraka. Naraka is first mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

NASTIK

One who negates the existence of god, the *Vedas* and life after death. There are many philosophical and religious schools in India who subscribe to this cult, heading them is the Charvaka or Lokayata philosophy (See Philosophy).

NAVANAGA

The nine serpents, Ananta, Vasuki, Shesha, Padmanabha, Kambal, Shankhapal, Dhritarashtra, Takshaka and Kaliya are known as the Navanaga. It is believed that if these nine names are recited in the morning a person becomes immune to snake poison.

OM

A most sacred and mysterious syllable also called pranava or akshara. It is a mantra, an object of profound religious meditation. It is believed that the *Veda Chanda* (metre), *Itihasa Purana* (history, ancient tales) all emanated from this sacred Om. The beginning and ending of all religious reading or writing is with this word. The word is a repository of divine energy and a person

constantly pronouncing it is believed to attain supernatural powers.

PAAP

Sin. An act which is contrary to ethics, religious code and morality is considered a 'paap.' From murder and violence to disobeying elders – all these acts are called paap. Puranic literature gives a long list of acts which are sinful. Prayaschita (atonement) is one way of getting rid of the ill effects of paap. There are prayaschitas described for every kind of paap in the scriptures.

PANCHADEVOPASANA

The worship of five (pancha) deities – Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Ganapati and Devi who by historical process have emerged as the most important in the Hindu pantheon. Numerous cults have flourished around them, their followers known as Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Sauryas, Ganapatyas and Shaktas. The worship of these deities together came to be known as *Panchayata Purana*.

PANCHAGAVYA

Five cow products mixed together to act as a purifier are called panchagavya. The mixture is sprinkled around with kusha grass to purify the atmosphere.

PANCHAKSHARA MANTRA

A mantra or incantation made up of five syllables Na-mah-Shi-va-ya, it is recited to please Shiva and get his blessings. Each syllable has a meaning. The mantra also relates to Shiva as the supreme cosmic dancer, Nataraja.

PANCHA MAHABHUTA

Five elements out of which the whole universe emanated – Prithvi (earth), Apa (water), Teja (light), Vayu (air) and Akasha (sky or space). This is a ritual by which Vishnu is worshipped in the form of five elements for the fulfilment of desires.

PANCHA MAHAYAJNA

A householder performs five rituals in a day for Brahma, the Gods, manes (ancestors) living beings and human beings. They are called Brahma yajna, Deva yajna, Pitr yajna, Bhuta yajna and Manushya yajna.

PARALOKA

The earth which human beings inhabit is called ihaloka (present world) and after death the soul drifts to other regions known as paralokas or divine worlds invisible to the human eye. The *Atharva Veda* says that after the funeral pyre has been lit, the god of fire, Agni, takes the soul to paraloka. Though there are a number of divine worlds named after different deities like

Indra (Indraloka), Brahma (Brahamloka) and so on, broadly speaking, swarga (heaven) and naraka (hell) are the two major paralokas. According to his deeds on earth (karma), a person reaches one of these regions still it is time to take a rebirth. A number of rituals are performed for the well-being and peace of departed souls in the paralokas.

PATALA

Regions under the earth where sinners are sent. In Puranic literature various patala regions are described as patalata, vitala, sutala, talatala, mahatala, rasatala and patala. They are endowed with heavenly luxuries; and under the patala lives Sesha the serpent holding the earth on his hood.

PATIVRATA

A woman completely faithful to her husband; one who does not think of another man even in her dreams, an ideal of Indian womanhood like Sita in the *Ramayana* (See People: Great Indians - Charvaka).

PISHACHA

A class of evil spirits said to be fond of raw flesh. They are both male and female in form and haunt ruined houses and graveyards and become active at night. There are certain temples in India where people possessed by these spirits go to be exorcised. Two such temples in Kerala are Chotani-kkara and Ettamannur.

PITARA

Ancestors or 'manes.' Fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers who have died are known as mrityu pitara and the progenitors of mankind. They are known to be in heaven and special pujas or ceremonies are performed to propitiate these ancestors (See Samskaras).

PRALAYA

A great deluge in which the universe is completely destroyed. The stories about pralaya are to be found in a number of mythological works. The first story about it is in the *Satapata Brahmana*. Legend goes that Manu found a small fish which told him of the impending deluge and how he could save himself from it. Manu shifted the fish to the sea. When the great flood arrived, Manu sat in a boat which was saved by the fish. When the waters receded, Manu performed a yajna (ritual sacrifice) from which a woman appeared. The two together recreated a living world.

PRANA

Breath of life or life itself as reflected in the act of respiration. It is believed there are five pranas together called panchapрана.

PRITHVI

The earth goddess generally represented as a cow. Pruthu is believed to have been the first king to introduced agriculture to man. Since the earth first opened up her favours to Pruthu, she came to be known as Prithivi. In his Varaha incarnation (See Dashavatara), Vishnu is said to have lifted Prithvi up on his tusks. Ancient Indian sculpture shows Prithvi lifted by the tusks of a boar. Later mythology placed Prithvi on the hood of the serpent Ananta or Sesha on whose coils Vishnu is believed to be resting. The earth is also known as Bhudevi and is depicted as one of Vishnu's consorts. Along with the sky she forms a couple – Dyaus-Prithvi. When Prithvi is excessively burdened by sinners and the weight of their sins, she appeals to the gods, one of whom takes an avatar (incarnation) on earth to lighten her burden.

PUNYA

Good acts on earth which yield good results. A person who collects 'punya' on earth is supposed to go heaven. Paap (sin) and punya (the sum of good deeds), naraka (hell) and swarga (heaven) are very basic concepts.

SALIGRAMA

The name of a sacred stone from the Saligrama village on the Gandaki river in Nepal. The black ammonite stone resembles the 'chakra' associated with Vishnu. Other black stones from the same river have holes and indents on them and are also regarded sacred though they do not look like the chakra. It is believed that Vishnu had made these holes with his Vajra (thunderbolt).

SAMADHI

The final resting place of a saint or religious leader, treated as a sacred place (See Philosophy: Samkhya, Yoga).

SAPTA CHIRANJIVA

Sapta – seven; Chiranjiva – immortal. According to mythology there are seven persons who are beyond death and are left behind to live forever. They are Ashwatthama, Vali, Vyasa, Hanumana, Vibhishana, Kripa and Parashurama.

SATI

A woman, who burns herself to death on the funeral pyre of her husband is known as a sati. She is glorified and even worshipped. There are a number of sati temples in Rajasthan. It is more a historical imperative than a religious concept. The practice of sati is now banned by law.

SHASTRA

Sanskrit, *Shas*-to train, *tra*-an instrument.

A manual for training/teaching, like the *Natya Shastra* (a treatise on the performing arts). *Dharma Shastra* (canons of law).

SIDDHI

The magical, spiritual, supernatural powers acquired during the course of yogic exercises or penance.

SHADRIPU

The six enemies of man; the qualities that lead him from the path of virtue or dharma and cloud his judgement. They are kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (infatuation), mada (intoxication) and matsara (jealousy).

SHRAVANA

One of the nine types of devotional acts, 'shravana' is listening to everything connected to God; be it chanting, religious stories or discourses.

TANTRA(S)

Lit. 'a means of faith.' Tantras are in the form of a dialogue between Shiva and his consort Shakti (Agamas). In answer to her queries, the god gives detailed instructions on worship. Composed c. 6th century AD some parts of the doctrine are kept secret and only communicated to those initiated into the mysteries of the tantrik cult. Tantriks celebrate Shakti as the primal source of energy.

TAPA

Also tapas. Lit. heat. Gearing oneself for the rigours of religious austerities. Tapa, yajna and dana are the three basic principles of the spiritual Hindu. According to the *Upa-nishads*, truth is tapa; to conquer the five senses is tapa; fire sacrifice, absence of passion are also tapa. Tapa is also performed to be rid of sins accumulated over previous births. Epics, *Puranas* and legends are full of stories of holy people and kings undergoing tapa – standing on one leg, starving, braving the icy cold of the Himalayas – till God appears before them to grant them a boon. Even demons have gained favours from gods through tapa (See Philosophy).

TARPANA

A ritualistic offering of water to propitiate gods, sages and ancestors. The person who makes the offering is blessed.

TILAK

A mark on the head either of vermillion, sandalwood paste, kasturi (musk) or bhasma (ash). The Vaishnavas (followers of Vishnu) make a U or Y pattern on their forehead with sandalwood paste while Shaivas (followers of Shiva) draw horizontal lines across their forehead with vibhuti or



Shaiva tilak

bhasma. The vermilion dot (tilak) is considered most auspicious for married women and young girls.

TIRTHA

Generally denotes a holy place of which there are thousands in India. Each tirtha has its own importance and significance and a visit includes a dip in the holy tank/river and offerings to the deity. In a wider sense the term tirtha has also come to be applied to revered persons like parents and gurus and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* lists 18 persons as tirthas on account of their political and administrative importance.

TULASI

The auspicious basil plant, also called Vrinda, is found in most Hindu balconies and courtyards or a specially constructed mandap or platform. The plant is a part of a daily worship. Leaves of the Tulasi are offered to Vishnu. Vaishnavas wear garlands of Tulasi beads around their necks (See Nature: Trees/Plants).

UPADESHA

Good counsel, advice or the teaching a guru imparts to his students. When a guru gives a particular mantra during an auspicious moment to his disciple this is also called upadesha. These upadeshas are as good as commandments for disciples and are considered guidelines that should be used to govern their lives.

UPAVAS

A fast or abstinence from eating. According to the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* yajna (sacrifice), dana (alms), tapa (worship) and upavas (fast) are the four basic ways to God. Various types of upavas are described in the *Anushasana Parva* of *Mahabharata*, the commonest being nirahara (without food), nirjala (without water) and ekabhukta (eating food once a day). Upavas is often undertaken as a religious vow. Parvati is called Aparna, 'who would not eat even a leaf,' while rigorously fasting to win Shiva's favour.

VIDYA

The four *Vedas*, six *Vedangas*, *Mimamsa* (See Philosophy) *Nyaya*, *Dharmashastra*, *Purana*, *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, and *Arthashastra* and *Gandharvaveda* are collectively known as works of knowledge or Vidya.

VRATA

A vow to observe certain austerities such as fasts in a prescribed manner. Vratas are enumerated in the different religious literatures with details of the kind of observances they involve. For instance chaturthi (fourth day of the moon) is the vrata of Ganesha. Other days are given to other - vratas. Vratas may be ritualistic pujas (worship), a fast, or simply the listening to chanting. Different desires or goals require different vratas. Stories based on vratas are known as *Vrata Katha*.

YAJNA

A fire sacrifice ritual of the Aryans. Offerings made to the fire to please the gods. Vedic rituals mention numerous yajnas and their techniques.

YUGA

An age of the world. Each of these ages is preceded by a period called its sandhya or twilight and is followed by another period of equal length called sandhyansa or portion of twilight, both equalling 1/10th of the Yuga. There are four Yugas – Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali – and their duration is first computed by the years of the gods.

In the Krita Yuga, only good prevailed on earth. The castes had one deity, one *Veda* and one dharma. Vishnu's first four avatars or incarnations were taken to protect the gods from the demons and he had no need to work on earth among men.

In the Treta Yuga, good decreased by a fourth. Men no longer practised austerities or liberality.

In the Dwapara Yuga, good diminished by a half. The *Veda* became fourfold. Disease, calamity and desires plagued men. This age ended with Krishna.

In Kali Yuga, the age we are in now, only a fourth of righteousness remains. Rules of right conduct decline as do people, who are now subject to hunger, fear, brutality; goaded by anger, desire, envy and cruelty. At the end of this period, Kalki will restore an age of goodness again, just like the Krita Yuga.

Vedic Gods

The earliest known trinity, the Vedic gods are Agni (fire), Vayu or Indra (wind or storm) and Surya (sun), whose places were in the earth, air and sky respectively. They and other gods were the children of the 'all-father', Prajapati, the creator and were brethren to the asuras or demons and mortals. In early Vedic times, no images were made of the deities but their qualities and - attributes were minutely described in human terms.

Prajapati's message to his children, the gods, men and demons is heard in the thunder as *Da - da - da*: *Damyata*, *Datta*, *Dayadhvam* – Be restrained, Be generous, Be merciful.

AGNI

Fire. One of the chief Vedic deities on par with Indra and Surya, most hymns are addressed to him. In heaven he appears as the sun, in the sky, as lightning, on earth as ordinary fire. Revered as the mediator between men and gods and protector of men and their homes, he witnesses their actions (Agnisakshi) and is honoured for his role in sacrifices (yajna). All oblations to the sacred fire (essential to all religious events) are made in the name of his wife Swaha, who bore him three sons, Pavaka, Pavamana and Suchi. His epithets include Abhimani, son of Brahma; Dhumaketu, whose sign is smoke; Rohitaswa, 'he with red horses'; Chhagaratha, ram rider; Saptajihva, seven tongued; Tomaradhara, javelin bearer.

ADITI AND THE ADITYAS

The mother of the gods whose sons are the Adityas – Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Aryan, Amsu, Bhaga, Daksha and Martanda. The *Rig Veda* says that Martanda was deformed, so Aditi cast him away. But his brothers, seeing his deformity, improved his appearance. He was afterwards known as Vivasvat or Surya, the Sun. Of the Adityas, Agni, Indra and Surya became, through sacrifices, the most powerful.

DYAUS AND PRITHVI

Lit. heaven (Dyaus) and earth (Prithvi), the most ancient Aryan deities, spoken of in the *Rig Veda* as the parents of the other gods; described as 'great, wise, energetic,' they were those who 'promote righteousness

and lavish gifts upon their worshippers.' Prithvi derives from the patronymic, Prithu, a shining prince who forced a reluctant Earth to yield her bounty for mankind. To do so, he cornered earth who had assumed the form of a cow and runaway. She agreed to give of her gifts only if the ground was levelled and a calf given to her. Manu Swamyambhu (self-born man), regarded by some *Puranas* as the first parent of mankind, was made into a calf and Prithu milked the earth and her bounty blessed the land in the form of grain and vegetables. The bountiful cow is a frequent theme in Hindu scriptures, a natural reflection of the pastoral Aryan's attitude to cattle as wealth.

INDRA

At one time the most popular deity, god of the firmament, armed with thunder and lightning. 'Vajra' was his dreaded thunderbolt. He was god of rain, presiding over - Indralok, his celestial court. His consort was Indrani, his courtiers the minor celestials, including divine dancers (Apsaras), musicians (Gandharvas and Kinnaras). His vehicle was Airavata, the wonder elephant produced at the churning of the Ocean of Milk (See Kshirasagara Manthana). His home was the mythical mount Meru. His chariot, Pushpaka Vimana was sent to carry many an epic hero around. His most dreaded enemy was Vritra (Drought).

Indra's position as ruler could be usurped every hundred years by a king, god or sage who was worthy enough and so he resorted to all manner of tricks to secure his place, notably sending a radiant apsara to distract an aspirant from the necessary penance or tapas (See Vishwamitra and Krishna; Literature: Sanskrit – Abhijnana Shakuntalam). Indra's other names are Sakra (the able one), Divapati (lord of gods), Bajri (who wields the thunderbolt), Vritraha (destroyer of drought), Megha-vahana (he who rides on clouds), Mahendra (the great Indra) and Swargapati (lord of heaven).

INDRANI

Consort of the king of heaven, Indrani, a 'storm' deity must be queen to whoever usurps the throne from her husband. She is said to have a son, Chitrugupta, who became accountant to Yama (god of death), keeping tally of men's good and bad deeds. Indrani is also called Shachi.

MARUTS

The further south and east the Aryan invaders went in India, the fiercer the storms they encountered, so the need for prayers to 'assistant' deities to Indra. The 49 Maruts

with their gold armour and golden weapons rush about the skies, harnessing rain clouds to defeat their foe Vritra (Drought). The *Vishnu Purana* says that they were born of the Rishi Kashyapa and his wife Diti and ultimately became his associates.

MITRA, VARUNA

The two deities are frequently named together in the *Vedas*, though Varuna is also addressed alone. Venerated as the sovereign ruler of gods and men, there are many beautiful hymns addressed to him. Varuna's influence declined later and he is described only as the god of the ocean who sits with his queen Varuni on a diamond throne holding court with Samudra the sea, river Ganga and the spirits of rivers, lakes and springs as his subjects, attended by a fabulous marine monster called Makara. Mitra - Varuna together are worshipped as righteous avengers of sin and falsehood. Varuna is also called Prachetas, the wise, Jalapati, the lord of water, Yadapati, lord of aquatic animals, Amburaja, king of waters and Pasi, the noose-carrier.

PARAJANYA

Parajanya whose name means 'one acting for another,' has functions similar to Indra's – he controls rain and nourishes plants and living creatures. In Puranic times Indra is styled the king of the gods, while Parajanya is spoken of as one who rules over and lives in the clouds.

PUSHAN

The *Rig Veda* hails Pushan as the 'nourisher,' just as Vishnu was later called 'preserver.' His help was sought to protect travellers and cattle: "Conduct us, Pushan, over our road ... go on before us. Smite away from before us the destructive wolf that seeks after us. Drive away from our path the waylayer, thief and robber..."

SOMA

The god of Somrasa, the celestial intoxicant. The Vedic hymns describe this deity as the one who 'represents and animates the juice of the Soma plant.' All 114 hymns of the 9th book of the *Rig Veda* are addressed to him. When Soma was first brought to the gods, they held a race for the first draught. Vayu won and drank three-fourths. Indra persuaded him to let him drink a quarter. Soma is later identified with the moon (Chandra). His other names are Indu and Shashi. He is said to have fathered Budha (the wise), the handsome regent of the planet Mercury after whom Budhwar or Wednesday is named (See Cosmos).

SURYA

The most important of the light deities,

Surya and Savitr are two names for the Sun commonly found in Vedic hymns. The most sacred mantra, the Gayatri is addressed to him as the lifegiver. As Savitr, in his full strength, he is described as golden eyed, golden handed, golden tongued, riding in a chariot of drawn by seven white-footed horses, driven by Aruna, his charioteer. In the Puranic age, which followed the Vedic age, Surya is described as a dark red man with three eyes and four arms, holding water lilies and blessing worshippers, seated on a red lotus. He is prayed to on the first Sunday of the month of Magha for healing. Of Surya's many names, the best known are Ravi, Bhanu, Dinakara (maker of the day), Bhaskara (maker of light), Vivasvat (radiant), Mihira (he who waters earth, or draws up moisture to form rain clouds), Grahapati (Lord of stars), Karma-sakshi (witness to men's deeds).

The *Vishnu Purana* says he married Sanjana, daughter of Vishwakarma the cosmic architect. Unable to bear his brightness she left him, leaving her three children behind. When Surya realised she had gone, he searched her out and found her hiding as a mare. A reconciliation took place only after he had taken the form of a horse. Sanjana's father chipped away an eighth of Surya's brilliance so that she could bear his presence. From the chipped bit was formed Vishnu's discus (chakra), Shiva's trident (trishul), Kartikeya, the war god's spear (vel) and the weapons of Kubera, god of wealth. His offspring include the Ashwins to whom he communicated the *Yajur Veda* and Karna of the *Mahabharata*.

TVASHTRI OR VISHWAKARMA

The architect and workman of the gods, he made the world and all that is in it and protects its creatures. He forms mortal husbands and wives and blesses them with offspring. He sharpens the iron axe of Agni and the thunderbolts of Indra. Tvashtri's pupils are Ribhus, skilled workmen, who made Indra's chariot, Pushpaka and his horses Uchhaisravas. Vishwakarma is still worshipped through everyday tools during Navaratri or Dussehra (See Festivals: Vishwakarma Puja).

USHAS

The Dawn, the most poetically described 'light' goddess in Vedic hymns, compared to a modest young girl, to a dancer clad in bright clothes, to a shy, beautiful bride escorted by her mother, to a loving wife who dresses up to enchant her husband. Her inspiring presence brings fresh hope each morning and was believed to bestow longevity on cattle and horses.

VAYU

God of the winds, associated with Indra and said to rule the atmosphere equally with him, Vayu is described as very handsome, moving in a glittering chariot pulled by a pair of red or purple horses. Another name for Vayu is Vata (hence the present Hindi term for 'atmosphere,' vatavaran). Also known as Pavana (the purifier), Vayu is lauded in both the great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as the father of crucial heroes – Hanuman, the monkey god and Bhima, the strongest Pandava. Vayu's vehicle is a deer and he carries a white flag. The *Puranas* call him the son of Aditi. His other names are: Anila (breath), Marut (air needed for life), Sparshana (he who touches), Gandhavaha (who carries odours).

YAMA

The *Vedas* describe Yama Dharmaraja, god of death and righteousness as the first man who died and showed mankind the way to the blessed realm of the gods. As Surya's son, Yama did not punish the bad. The good and pious went joyfully to his realm of light. But the *Puranas* say he is a judge of men, who according to Chitrakupta's accounts of good and bad deeds, despatches people to Indra's swarga (heaven) or to the different reaches of naraka (hell). This is the concept that prevails today. Yama the judge rides a black buffalo and carries a noose to drag away dead bodies. Yama is the father of the eldest Pandava, Yudhishthira called Dharmaraja after Yama. Some of his other names are Samavrutti (he who judges impartially), Kritanta (the finisher), Samana (the leveller), Kala (Time), Vaivasvata (son of Vivasvat, the Sun) and Antaka (he who ends life).

Puranic Gods

The Puranic triad consists of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, their divine consorts and offspring.

BRAHMA

From the Sanskrit root *brih* – to expand, Brahma is the first of the Hindu trinity, the creator, father of gods and men, the Vedic Prajapati, Lord of all creatures. When the universe was in darkness, he created the five elements. In the earliest writings, Brahma meant a mantra. In later Vedic texts he is identified as the Creator, relating him to the earlier Vedic Prajapati. Brahma is not worshipped in the temple anywhere in India except at Pushkar in Rajasthan. His consort is Saraswati. It would seem Brahma is practically merged with Vishnu for he is commonly depicted as seated on a lotus that sprang from Vishnu's navel. And



Ganesha, the beloved deity

both Brahma and Vishnu are called Narayana (one who moves on the waters), for if Brahma created life, it was Vishnu the Preserver who developed and sustained it. Brahma's other names are Atmabhu, the self-born; Parameshthi, who as the first Brahman, performed all great Hindu yajnas; Lokesha, Lord of the world; Hiranya-garbha, who came from the golden egg; Adikavi, the first poet.

SARASWATI

Lit. 'watery, elegant'. Brahma's wife, the goddess of wisdom, science and music, the 'mother' of the *Vedas* and the inventor of the Devanagari alphabet (used in Sanskrit, Hindi and Marathi). Her instrument is the veena and her seat, a white lotus. A mythical river is named for her and she is re-

vered as the goddess of vach (speech). Saraswati represents the combination of power and intelligence supposed to have operated in the work of creation (See Festivals: Saraswati Puja; Performing Arts: Dance, Music). Her other names are Gayatri, Savitri, Veenavadini and Satarupa or a hundred forms.

VISHNU

From the Sanskrit root *vis* to enter or pervade, ie, one who fills the universe. Vaishnava devotees (the 'bhaktas' or worshippers of Vishnu), who are legion, hail him as the supreme god. He alone takes ten specific earthly incarnations as Preserver. Vishnu's heaven is Vaikuntha and he is commonly depicted reclining on the great serpent Adishesha, with his consort Lakshmi

at his feet and Brahma seated in a lotus growing from his navel (Padmanabha). He was also the god most easily adapted to popular worship, especially from the medieval Bhakti age onwards, when his epic incarnations of Rama and Krishna became the most widespread and beloved icons of Hinduism. Vishnu's attributes are his conch (Shankha), his discus (Sri Chakra), his mace (Gada) and a lotus (Padma). The *Vishnu Sahasranama* (1,000 names of god) is devoutly sung in Hindu homes even today and he is possibly the single greatest source of male Hindu names. Some of his appellations are Madhusudana – destroyer of the demon Madhu; Kesava – one with fine hair; Madhava – made of honey; Janardhana – one who causes people to worship; Hari – the saviour; Ananta – the endless; Damodara – bound with a rope; Mukunda – the deliverer; Purushottama – the supreme man; Pitambara – he who wears yellow garments.

LAKSHMI

Also called Sri (the auspicious), the consort of Vishnu is depicted as radiantly beautiful, produced from the churning of the Milk Ocean (See Kshirasagara Manthana) and worshipped as the goddess of love, beauty and prosperity. During Deepavali, the festival of lights, Lakshmi is propitiated with special prayers and she is honoured in south India by the Varalakshmi Puja. Her vehicles are an elephant and an owl and she is usually shown seated on a lotus, showering gold coins from her hands on worshippers. Some of her names are Hari-priya, beloved of Vishnu; Padma, Padmaja or Padmalaya, lotus; Neeraja, born of water; Jalaja, ocean born; Chanchala, the fickle (as in fortune); and Lokamata, mother of the world. (See Festivals).

KAMADEVA

The god of love is usually described as the son of Vishnu and Lakshmi. Kama is not worshipped in images but is revered during marriages. He is usually shown as a comely youth with a bow and flower-arrows, travelling about the three worlds with his wife Rati, Spring, the cuckoo, the bumblebee and the gentle breezes. His other names are Madana – who intoxicates with love; Manmatha – who agitates the mind; Mara – who wounds; Pradyumna – who conquers all; Ananga – bodiless.

SHIVA

Lit. the bright or happy one, the 'Destroyer' in the Hindu trinity, after Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver. But since Hindus view death not as a process of being snuffed out but as a change into a

new form of life, the Destroyer is really the one who re-creates, hence his name Shiva. The name Shiva is not found in *Vedas* but he is identified with the Vedic Rudra (*rud* – to weep), son of Agni who wept that his being was impure. But Rudra who drank the poison at the churning of the Milk Ocean to save the world became the supreme god, being known ultimately as Mahadeva or Maheshwara – the Great God – which not even Vishnu is called. Shiva's favourite earthly city is Kashi (Varanasi) and his abode is Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas. He is worshipped on earth as the lingam or phallus. Best known as an ascetic, lost in deep meditation up in the Himalayas, his vehicle (*vahana*) is his faithful bull, Nandi. His hair is matted (*Jatadhara*), he wears the crescent moon on his topknot (*Indudhara*, *Somasekhara*, *Chandrasekhara*) and his weapon is the Trishul (*Pinaka*). Ganga in her pride, tried to dislodge him when she descended to earth (See Ganga) and to teach her a lesson, Shiva bound her in his hair and let her out as a trickle (*Gangadhara*). Shiva sits on a tiger skin and his body is smeared with ashes. Because snakes were despised and feared, he hung a serpent round his neck as a mark of favour. He is called Ashutosh (easily pleased), and demands very little from his worshippers. He is the particular friend of the deformed, the wretched and the destitute.

Shiva's consort, Ganga's sister Parvati (born of the mountains) is held to be the supreme manifestation of cosmic energy (*Shakti*) and Shiva is often hailed in tandem with her as Gauri-Shankar. Shiva is said to have danced with pure ecstasy (*Satchidananda*) when he understood the cause of all things through his *tapasya* (penance). In the *Tandava* (dance) he performed, creation is said to have been energized and the sacred syllable 'Om' (the deepest vibration of the cosmos) was first uttered. Shiva is also *Nataraja*, Lord of the Dance. He holds a damaru (drum) and a ball of fire. He is also the lord of demon hosts (*Bhutas* and *Ganas*) whom he can summon at will to destroy enemies. Among his thousand names are *Ishaana* (the ruler), *Sthanunatha* (the everlasting); *Digambara* (clothed in space or naked); *Girisha* (lord of the hills); *Mrityunjaya* or (one who conquers death). Shiva is especially worshipped at 12 temples across India, the *Jyotirlingas*; each with a consecrated name.

DEVI

The goddess or 'Mahadevi,' the great goddess, consort of Shiva and daughter of Himavat, the Himalayas is a compound of several divine forms and as *Shakti* (en-



Shivalinga puja

ergy/power/strength) is linked with the earliest, pre-Aryan Earth Mother with two characters, mild and fierce, both of which bear many attributes, epithets and legends. In her mild aspects, she is *Uma* (light), *Gauri* (golden) and *Parvati* (mountain born). In her terrible form she is *Durga* (the inaccessible), *Kali* (the black), *Chandi/Chandika* (the ferocious), and *Bhairavi* (the terrible). She is specially worshipped during *Durga Puja* in Bengal and Orissa (See Festivals). Several names are given to *Devi* in the *Chandi Mahatmya* which celebrates her victories over asuras:

Durga. Dasabhuja or ten-armed; *Simhavahini*, 'she who rides a lion'; *Mahisashura Mardini*, destroyer of *Mahisha* the demon; *Jagadhatri*, one who fosters the

world; *Kali*, the black one; *Muktakesi*, she with unbound hair; *Tara*, the star; *Chinna Mastaka*, the form assumed to kill the demon *Nisumbha*; *Jagatgauri*, the world's fair and golden one.

From Shiva, she gets the names *Bhagavati* (divine), *Ishaani*, *Ishwari*, *Maheshwari* (the Lord's consort), from her origin she is called *Girija* (mountain born), *Daksha* (born of the divinity *Daksha*, who quarrelled with Shiva). She is *Kanyakumari* (the youthful virgin). Other names are *Ambika* (the mother), *Nitya* (eternal), *Vijaya* (victorious), *Riddhi* (the rich), *Sati* (the virtuous). *Devi* is also hailed as *Sarvamangala* (always auspicious), *Sakambhari* (nourisher of herbs), *Meenakshi* (fish-shaped eyes), *Kamakshi* (eyes

expressing love), Annapurna or goddess of plenty. (See Festivals; Holy Places: Temples; Performing Arts: Dance, Music, Theatre).

GANESHA

Gana + Isha, or Gana + pati, Lord of the ganas or troops of lesser deities attendant on him. He is the god of wisdom and remover of obstacles (Vigneshwara) and is always propitiated at the beginning of any venture or the start of studies. He is portrayed as a short, fat man with a protuberant belly, four hands and the head of an elephant with one broken tusk and is said to have written down the *Mahabharata* dictated by Vyasa. His attendant is a mouse (Mushika) and he holds a 'modak,' – a ball of boiled and mashed lentil mixed with dried fruit, jaggery and coconut which is dipped in batter and deep fried – his favourite sweet. (See Festivals: Ganesha Chaturthi). There are many stories about how he acquired his head and single tusk, given in detail in the *Brahma Vaivarta-Purana*.

KARTIKEYA

The god of war, identified with Angaraka, the regent of the planet Mars, son of Shiva and Parvati and brother of Ganesha (See Kama). He was fostered by the constellation Kritika (Pleiades), hence his name, Kartikeya. He is widely worshipped in Tamil Nadu, where six of his temples form a pilgrim circuit. He was born to destroy the demon Taraka, a daitya (asura) whose austerities threatened the supremacy of the gods. He rides a peacock called Paravani and his weapon is a spear (vel), hence his name Velayudha. His two wives are Devayani and Valli. Among his many names are Subrahmanya, Kumara (the youth), Arumukham (six-faced), Skanda (the war god), Guha (the mysterious one), Senapati (the warlord), Rijukaya (straight bodied). See Holy Places: Temples – Palani; Literature: Sanskrit – Kalidasa – Kumarsambhavam)

Lesser Deities

RISHIS

An inspired poet or sage to whom the gods revealed knowledge, the seven rishis or the 'mind-born Prajapatis,' sons of Brahma, figure often in Hindu scriptures. The *Satapata Brahmana* lists them as Gautama, Bharadwaja, Vasishta, Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Kashyapa and Atri. The *Mahabharata* gives them as Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya and Vasishta. The *Vayu Purana* adds Bhṛigu to it, totalling eight rishis. The *Vishnu Purana* adds Bhṛigu and Daksha to make up the nine Brahma-



Saraswati, Lakshmi

rishis or the greatest rishis. Manu, Valmiki, Vyasa, Kaundinya are also listed by other authorities. Of these Atri, Bharadwaja, Kashyapa, Kaundinya, and Vishwamitra (Kaushika) are the founders of widespread gotras (clans) of priestly descendants.

BRAHMARISHIS

The *Vishnu Purana* says, "When Brahma wished to populate the world, he created mind-born sons, like himself – Bhṛigu, Pulastya, Kratu, Angiras, Marichi, Daksha, Atri and Vasishta. Only seven are mentioned in the *Mahabharata* and these seven Rishis called *Sapta Rishi Mandala*, are said to be visible in the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear.

ANGIRAS

A rishi and Prajapati to whom many hymns of the *Rig Veda* are attributed. Personified astrologically as Brihaspati, regent of the planet Jupiter; a Rig Vedic priest said to have 'drawn forth fire' for the use of men. In his identity as Angiras, he is said to be born from Brahma's mouth. His wives were Smṛiti (memory), Swadha (oblation) and Shraddha (faith), daughter of Kardama plus two daughters of Daksha.

ATRI

Lit. 'an eater'. A great rishi and author of many Vedic hymns. The *Vedas* call him one of the ten Prajapatis or lords of creation engendered by Manu. Later he is called a mind-born son of Brahma. His wife was the

chaste and good Anasuya, daughter of Daksha, and their son was the hot tempered rishi Durvasa (See Religious Texts – Mahabharata – Kunti; Literature: Sanskrit – Abhijnana Shakuntalam). The *Ramayana* describes Rama and Sita's visit to Atri and Anasuya in their hermitage in Chitrakoot. Atri is one of the rishis of the Great Bear constellation.

BHRIGU

A Vedic sage, one of the Prajapatis or progenitors of men, founder of the race of Bhrigus (Bhargavas) to whom Jamadagni and his son Parashurama (Vishnu's sixth avatar) were born. Bhrigu is one of the great rishis. Manu's institutes of Hindu law were confided to him.

DAKSHA

Lit. 'able, competent, intelligent,' connoting creative power. Daksha is the son of Brahma, one of the Prajapatis. One of his daughters, Sati, married Shiva, and killed herself because of a quarrel between her husband and father at Daksha's great sacrifice (See Holy Places: Temples). Daksha's nature is varied and often dual. He is both creator and created: the first of men, the first son of man, the father of the stars and their offspring, the creator of Aditi, the first mother, as well as her creation.

The story of Daksha's sacrifice is frequently alluded to – an event rudely interrupted by Shiva who was uninvited. Various divinities came to grief in the melee that followed. Indra and the Prajapatis were trampled on. Pushan broke his teeth, Bhrigu had his beard pulled and it culminated in the retreat of Shiva to deep meditation after making the universe quake and Daksha plead for mercy. Daksha was a lawgiver and is reckoned to be one of the 18 writers of the *Dharma Shashtra* (See Law).

KRATU

Another great rishi and Prajapati. The *Vishnu Purana* says his wife Sanmati created the 60,000 Valikhilyas or pigmy sages as small as a thumb point.

MARICHI

Chief of the Maruts, one of the Prajapatis, said to have sprung directly from Brahma. Father of the rishi, Kashyapa.

NARADA

Author of some *Rig Vedic* hymns, a Prajapati and one of the seven great rishis. Inventor of the veena (See: Performing Arts: Music – Instruments), according to some sources, and chief of the Gandharvas or heavenly musicians and is connected with the Krishna legend. He was also one of

the great writers on law and authored a text book, the *Naraduja Dharma Shashtra*. Narada is said to traverse devaloka (heaven), prithvi (earth) and patala (the nether world) lute in hand. In folklore he is considered a mischief-maker whose intrigues, though initially explosive, always end well. His other names are Kalikaraka (strife-maker), Pisuna (messenger) and Kapi-vaktra (monkeyfaced).

PULAHA

One of the great rishis and Prajapatis, husband of Kshama (mercy or forgiveness), he had three sons – Kardama, Arvarivat and Sahishnu.

VASISHTA

Lit. 'most wealthy,' celebrated Vedic sage, author of many hymns. According to Manu, one of the Sapta Rishis and ten Prajapatis. There was great rivalry between him and Vishwamitra who through great sacrifices had risen to the Brahminic state from that of a Kshatriya. Vasishta appears variously as the high priest of several powerful kings like Sudasa. In this period, Vishwamitra destroyed Vasishta's sons and in his grief, Vasishta threw himself down from Mount Meru. But the rocks he fell upon turned soft like cotton, for earth would not harm such a great sage. He passed unscathed through a burning forest and plunged into a swollen river. But the river loosened his bonds and landed him safely, unbound (Vipasha) and was hence called that (now Beas).

He then jumped into a river full of crocodiles, but the river, alarmed at the thought of harming him, rushed away in a hundred directions (Satadru), and so took its name as Satadru (now Sutlej). Vasishta had to return safely to his hermitage and continue to be plagued by Vishwamitra in various ways until the seething rishi earned merit and learned wisdom. Even then, he was satisfied only when Vasishta acknowledged him as a Brahmarishi and thereafter they were reconciled. In the *Markandeya Purana*, Vasishta is the kulpapati or family priest of Raja Harischandra and in the *Vishnu Purana*, he is family priest to the royal house of Ikshvaku, right right down to the reign of Rama.

RELIGIOUS TEXTS

The Vedas

From the Sanskrit root Vid, to know. 'Veda' thus means knowledge. As the four *Vedas* were not written for centuries after they were originally composed, the term signifies knowledge transmitted orally. The *Vedas* are not the work of one person, but are said to have been divinely communi-

cated to a number of rishis or saints who in turn taught their disciples. Thought to have been composed between 2500 and 5000 BC, the oldest is the *Rig Veda*, followed by the *Yajur*, the *Sama* and the *Atharva Veda*. A *Veda* consists of two parts: the *Sambhita*, or collection of mantras and hymns and the *Brahmana*, a collection of religious and ritual formulae. Attached to each *Brahmana* is an *Upanishad*, or mystical doctrine (See Philosophy).

These are less revered than the *Sambhitas* and *Brahmanas* for while the first two are spoken of as Shruti ('heard' directly from divine sources), the *Upanishads* are Smriti (memorized or learnt).

The *Vedas* reflect the religious changes that transpired in the span of their composition. The *Rig Veda* is full of childlike trust in the elements and voices the concerns of the nomadic, pastoral Aryans in the simpler, early stages of their social evolution. The *Yajur Veda* contains the older, *Krishna Yajur* (dark Yajur) and the *Shukla Yajur* (light Yajur), said to have come about because of a difference of opinion between the guru Vaisampayana and his pupil Yajnavalkya. The guru cursed the shishya and his other pupils were transformed into partridges (tittiri) hence certain texts which they memorised are still called *Taittiriya*s. The *Yajur Veda* deals mainly with sacrifices (yajna).

The *Sama Veda* is devoted to metrical chants (saman). The *Atharva Veda* is the 'book' of magical spells and charms, including some for healing.

The Puranas

Lit. the ancient or old traditional stories of which there are 36, plus five principal Tantras. Together with the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, they are a major source of Hindu mythology. These books are still revered and read across India. Of the epics, the *Ramayana* supposedly goes back to 2350 BC and the *Mahabharata* to 1424 BC. The *Puranas* came later. Unlike the *Vedas*, all these books were open to all castes. The same stories crop up in them often. Each *Purana* seems to exalt a particular god. The Hindu trinity of Brahma – Vishnu – Shiva are in authority from the Puranic Age onwards. The *Puranas* fall into three groups.

- In praise of Brahma: the *Brahma*, the *Brahmanda*, the *Brahmavaivarta*, the *Markandeya*, the *Bhavishya* and the *Vamana*.
- Relating to Vishnu: the *Vishnu*, the *Bhagavata*, the *Naraduja*, the *Garuda*, the *Padma* and the *Varaha*.
- Chiefly about Shiva: the *Shiva*, the

Linga, the *Skanda*, and the *Agni*, the *Vayu*, the *Matsya* and the *Kurma*.

The five main topics covered are the creation of the universe; its destruction and recreation; the genealogy of gods and patriarchs; the reign and period of the Manus (long-ruling kings); the history of the kings of the great solar and lunar (Surya and Chandra Vamsha) dynasties. Though written at different times, by different hands (with many discrepancies), they constitute Hindu religious authority and are said to have been arranged by the author of the *Mahabharata*, Sage Vyasa.

VEDA VYASA

The composer and arranger of the sacred epic the *Mahabharata* and the sacred text of the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*. Of the many *Puranas* in existence, 18 are known as *Mahapuranas*. The 'minor' ones are called *Upapuranas*. Veda Vyasa (or Vyasa Veda, diviner of the *Vedas*) could not have authored the *Mahabharata* (1,00,000 shlokas or verses) as well as the 4,00,000 shlokas of the 18 *Mahapuranas*. The belief is that a holy man who is given the title Veda Vyasa is born from age to age to conveniently rearrange the *Vedas*. The sage who is said to have composed the *Puranas* was the 28th. His name was Krishna Dwaipayana and he belongs to the present cycle of creation. Legend also has it that before the destruction of the world, the 29th Veda Vyasa, named Ashwatthama will appear.

AGNI PURANA

Composed c. 9th century AD, it has 383 chapters and 11,457 verses. This *Purana* (old text) is said to have been revealed by Agni, the deity of fire, to the muni Vasishta, to teach him about Brahma. This work, mainly in praise of Shiva, also expounds certain rituals, has descriptions of the cosmos and chapters on the duties of kings and the art of warfare.

BHAGAVATA PURANA

One of the best-known Puranic works, of very ancient origin, believed to have been composed in south India. Tradition goes that it was authored by Krishna Dwaipayana, the Vyasa who composed the *Mahabharata* epic. Also called the *Srimad Bhagavata*, it has 12 khands or chapters and 18,000 verses. Its 10th book contains the story of Krishna, including the origin of the Raslila (See Performing Arts: Dance) and its 11th, the philosophy of the Bhagavata Dharma. It influenced Indian art and literature and is the core of many Krishna cults in India.

BHAVISHYA PURANA

'*Purana* of the future.' A number of histo-

rical events were added on down the centuries and presented as predictions. Its original section may date to the 10th century AD. A printed addition has 212 chapters. This *Purana* details the legends and worship of the Sun god, the Serpent god and the Fire god.

BRAHMA PURANA/ADI PURANA

The first 'old text', a title accorded to *Brahma Purana*, repeated to the sage Marichi by Brahma the creator. Of the 13,783 verses of this Vaishnava *Purana* (also called the *Adi Purana*), 32 chapters relate to the Krishna legend, six to Surya worship and one to Ganesha.

BRAHMANDA PURANA

Composed near Nasik (Maharashtra) at the Triambakeshwar (Shiva) temple, in the 4th century AD, it has 109 chapters and 12,000 verses and resembles the *Vayu Purana*. It describes the creation myth, the original cosmic egg Brahmanda from which all life burst forth and the dwipas or continents formed. It also contains historically accurate details of Kshatriya dynasties and describes the Parashurama, Rama and Krishna avatars.

BRAHMAVAIVARTA PURANA

A Vaishnava work of recent origin, c. 16th century AD, with 276 chapters, 10,000 verses esteemed by Krishna cults like the Gaudiya, Vallabha and Radhavallabha Sampradayas. It has four books (khands) named *Brahma*, *Prakriti*, *Ganapati* and *Krishna*. This *Purana* deifies Radha, Krishna's childhood sweetheart (See Puranic Gods).

GARUDA PURANA

Named after the mythical eagle, Garuda, the vahana or vehicle of Vishnu, it was composed c. 8th-10th century AD. Divided into *Purva Khanda* (229 chapters) and *Uttara Khanda* (35 chapters) the *Purana* totals about 8,800 verses. An important chapter dealing with afterlife is read during the sraadh ceremony held in memory of a family member who has passed away (See Samskaras).

LINGA PURANA

Composed c. 7th-8th centuries AD, it has 163 chapters and 11,000 verses and details the importance of worshipping Shiva in his phallic form, the linga/lingam.

MARKANDEYA PURANA

Composed during the Gupta period (See History: Dynasties), it contains 138 chapters and 1,000 verses that tell the stories of Rama and Krishna and have hymns to Vedic deities like Agni and Surya. It details the legend of sage Markandeya, its reputed

author, celebrated for his great austerities. He is called Dirghayus, longlived. His parents were asked in a boon, to choose between a shortlived but intelligent and righteous son and a dullard who would live to a hundred. They chose the first. Markandeya was supposed to die at sixteen, but when the moment came, he was saved from Yama's noose by Shiva himself.

The *Purana* stresses the importance of Karma and its potential to endow man with powers which even the gods do not possess.

One of the most cherished Hindu legends is found in this *Purana*, about Raja Harischandra of the Ikshvaku dynasty. He was called 'Satyavadi' because of his steadfast adherence to his pledged word, whatever it cost him.

An ancestor of the epic-hero Rama, Harischandra fell foul of the irascible Rishi Vishwamitra and had to make amends. He surrendered his kingdom and wealth and with his wife Shaihya (Taramati) and son Rohitaswa sought sanctuary in the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi). But even there the relentless sage demanded that he complete his account.

Harischandra sold his wife and child into slavery and found work in a cremation ground. One night Shaihya brought Rohitaswa, who had died of snakebite, to be cremated. But since she could not pay for a shroud, Harischandra asked her to sell her mangalsutra or wedding chain to raise the money. The weeping mother did so and husband and wife resolved to die on their son's pyre. It was at this juncture that the gods intervened, proclaimed Harischandra a 'Satyavadi' and restored his kingdom.

This legend worked curiously on popular imagination and was retold many times in many languages.

MATSYA PURANA

Composed on the banks of the sacred river Narmada (1st-2nd centuries AD), one edition gives it 291 chapters and 14,000 verses. Traditionally lauded as one of the first *Puranas*, it details the story of Vishnu's Matsyavatara or fish incarnation to save mankind (See Dashavatara).

NARADA PURANA

Named for the celestial wandering sage, Narada it was composed around the 6th century AD with 207 chapters and 18,101 verses. It stresses Vishnu worship and describes the religious importance of many holy places like Pushkar, Kurukshetra, Mathura, Vrindavan, Badridham, Rameswaram, Jagannath temple in Puri and the Vaishnava pilgrim circuit in Orissa (Puru-

shottama-kshetra-yatra).

PADMA PURANA

A popular Vaishnava *Purana*, composed c. 3rd-4th century AD, some additions were made in the 16th century. In a modern edition, there are six books, 628 chapters and 48,452 verses stressing the importance of Vishnu worship. Kalidasa, took the theme for his play *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* (See Literature: Sanskrit) from the *Swarga Khanda* of this *Purana*, while Bhavabhuti found in it the source material for his *Uttara Rama Charita* (See Literature: Sanskrit).

SKANDA PURANA

The longest of the *Puranas*, it is dedicated to Kartikeya or Kumara, the war lord (See Puranic Gods). It has seven books and 81,000 verses and is the second work by Veda Vyasa after the *Mahabharata*.

VARAHA PURANA

A Vaishnava *Purana*, composed in prose and verse c. 10th century AD, it narrates the story of Vishnu's Varahavatara, the boar incarnation (See Dashavatara). It has 17 chapters on the geography of the sacred Mathura region and many stories on Shiva, Durga and Ganesha.

VAYU PURANA

Believed to be first recited by the Vedic wind god Vayu (father of Hanuman and Bhima), it is of very ancient origin and contains 112 chapters and 24,000 verses. It also contains long descriptions of the region round the river Narmada and the country of Malwa, creation myths, details of sacrifice and the meaning of dreams and omens, besides the usual Puranic content of royal dynasties.

VISHNU PURANA

A popular *Purana* of great antiquity composed c. 2nd century BC in six books, 126 chapters and 6,000 verses. The fifth book details the Krishna story, while the fourth book gives historically important royal generations.

VAMANA PURANA

Composed in the Kurukshetra region, c. 7th century AD in 92 chapters with 10,000 verses. It begins with the story of Vishnu's dwarf incarnation, the Vamanavatar. It has both Vaishnava and Shaiva mythology. Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam* closely resembles the *Shiva Parvati Akhyana* or legend of this *Purana* (See Literature: Sanskrit).

GRIHA SUTRAS

Literary works composed between the 7th century BC and 2nd century AD which deal with the series of ceremonies and rituals

relating to the family like births, marriages and so on. The following *Griha Sutras* are available to this day – *Ashvalayana*, *Kausbitaki*, *Shankhayana*, *Bodhayana*, *Agniveshya*, *Bharadwaja*, *Apastamba*, *Satyashadha*, *Vaikhyanasa*, *Manava*, *Varaha*, *Paraskara*, *Gobbila*, *Khadira*, *Jaiminiya* and *Kaushika*.

The Epics

RAMAYANA

The oldest of the Sanskrit epic poems, written by the sage Valmiki, the Ramayana is supposed to have been composed about 5th century BC and to have received its present form a century or two later. The Ramayana is divided into seven khandas or sections and contains about 50,000 lines.

Rama, the eldest son of Dasaratha, a king of the solar race, reigned at Ayodhya. Rama is the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu and made his appearance in the world at the end of the Treta Yuga or second age.

King Dasaratha was childless and performed the Ashwamedha yajna or sacrifice for children. His devotion was accepted by the gods, and he received the promise of four sons. At this time the gods were in great terror of Ravana, the demon who ruled Lanka. To help the gods Vishnu decided to be born as Rama.

Dasaratha was performing a sacrifice when Vishnu appeared to him as a glorious being from out of the sacrificial fire and gave to him a pot of nectar for his wives to drink. Dasaratha gave half of the nectar to Kausalya, mother of Rama, a quarter to Kaikeyi to whom Bharata was born, and the fourth part to Sumitra, who brought forth two sons, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. The brothers were all attached to each other, but Lakshmana was totally devoted to Rama and Shatrughna to Bharata.

The four brothers grew up together at Ayodhya but while they were still youngsters the sage Vishwamitra sought the aid of Rama to protect him from rakshasas. Dasaratha, though unwilling, was constrained to consent to the sage's request. Rama and Lakshmana then went to the hermitage of Vishwamitra and there Rama killed the demoness Taraka. Vishwamitra supplied Rama with celestial arms and exercised considerable influence over his actions. He then took Rama and his brother to Mithila to the court of Janaka, king of Videha. Janaka's lovely daughter Sita was being offered in marriage to anyone who could bend the wonderful bow which had once belonged to Shiva. Rama not only bent the bow but broke it,

and thus won the hand of the princess who became a most virtuous and devoted wife. Rama's three brothers also were married to a sister and two cousins of Sita.

Meanwhile, preparations were made at Ayodhya for the coronation of Rama. Kaikeyi, the second wife of Dasaratha and mother of Bharata, was Dasaratha's favourite wife. Under the influence of her spiteful hunchbacked female slave, Manthara, Kaikeyi demanded that Bharata be crowned king and Rama be sent into exile for 14 years. Dasaratha gave in but he was a broken man.

Rama departed uncomplaining with his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana and travelling southward, he rested at Chitrakoot, in the Dandaka forest, between the Yamuna and Godavari rivers. Soon after the departure of Rama, Dasaratha died, and Bharata was called upon to ascend the throne. He declined and set out for the forest with an army to bring Rama back. When the brothers met, Rama refused to return until the term of his father's promise had been fulfilled. At length it was arranged that Bharata should return and act as his brother's viceregent.

Bharata returned to Ayodhya but refused to ascend the throne. Instead, he placed Rama's khadams or wooden sandals on the throne as a symbolic gesture of Rama's rule.

Rama passed ten years of his banishment moving from one hermitage to another and went at length to the abode of the sage Agastya, near the Vindhya mountains (See Sages and Saints) who told Rama to take up residence at Panchavati on the river Godavari. Rakshasas abounded in this area and one of them named Surpanakha, a sister of Ravana, saw Rama and fell in love with him. He repelled her advances and in her jealousy she attacked Sita. This so enraged Lakshmana that he cut off her ears and nose. She brought her brothers Khara and Dushana with an army of rakshasas to avenge her wrongs, but they were all destroyed. Smarting under her mutilation she went to her brother Ravana in Lanka and described Sita in such glowing terms that Ravana wanted to see her for himself.

Ravana proceeded to Rama's hut in an aerial car and while his accomplice Maricha lured Rama from home, Ravana assumed the form of a mendicant and carried her off by force to Lanka. Rama's despair and rage at the loss of his beloved wife was terrible. He and Lakshmana went in pursuit and tracked down Ravana with the help of the bird Jatayu who had given battle to Ravana and vanquished,

was in his death throes. On their way they killed Kabandha, a headless monster, whose disembodied spirit counselled Rama to seek the aid of Sugriva, king of monkeys. The two brothers after overcoming some obstacles and assisting Sugriva to recover Kishkindhya, his capital from his usurping brother Vali, entered into an alliance with him. Rama received not only the support of all the forces of Sugriva and his allies but the active support of Hanuman, son of the wind, minister and general of Sugriva.

By superhuman effort their armies were transported to Sri Lanka by 'Rama's bridge,' and after many fiercely-contested battles the city of Lanka was taken, Ravana was killed and Sita rescued.

The recovery of his wife filled Rama with joy, but there were rumours about her honour. She asserted her purity but was asked to prove her innocence by the ordeal of fire. She entered the flames in the presence of men and gods, and Agni, god of fire, led her forth and placed her in Rama's arms unhurt. Rama then returned, taking with him his chief allies to Ayodhya. Reunited with his three brothers, he was solemnly crowned (the celebrated event is known as Pattabhisheka) amidst great rejoicing.

However, the going was not smooth. When his subjects blamed him for taking back his wife he resolved, although she was pregnant, to send her to spend the rest of her life at the hermitage of Valmiki. There she gave birth to twin sons, Lava and Kusha. When they were about 15, they wandered accidentally to Ayodhya and were recognized by their father who acknowledged them and recalled Sita. She returned and in a public assembly declared her purity and called upon the earth to verify her words. The ground opened and received 'the daughter of the furrow.' Rama thus lost his wife forever.

THE MAHABHARATA

The great epic poem of the Hindus, the longest in the world, it is divided into 18 paravas or books, and contains about 220,000 lines. The poem is attributed to a divine source. The reputed author was Krishna Dwaipayana, the Vyasa, or arranger, of the *Vedas*. He is said to have taught the poem to his pupil Vaisampayana, who afterwards recited it at a festival to King Janmejaya. It narrates the story of the great war between the Kauravas and Pandavas who were descendants, through Bharata, from Puru, the great ancestor of one branch of the lunar race. The object of the great struggle was the kingdom whose capital was Hastinapura (elephant city) the

ruins of which are traceable 145 km north-east of Delhi, on an old bed of the Ganga.

King Shantanu, descendant of Bharata, had a son, Devavrata, better known as Bhishma. When in his old age Shantanu wished to marry again, the hereditary rights of Bhishma were an obstacle to his desire (See Myths and Legends: Bhishma). To gratify his father, Bhishma divested himself of all rights of succession, and Shantanu then married Satyawati. She bore him two sons, the elder of whom, Chitrangada, succeeded to the throne, but was soon killed in battle by a Gandharva king who bore the same name. Vichitravirya, the younger son ascended the throne, but died childless, leaving two widows, Ambika and Ambalika, daughters of a king of Kashi.

Satyavati then called on Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa to fulfil the law, and carry out the duty of continuing lineage. Vyasa had lived the life of a hermit in the woods, and his severe austerities had made him terrible in appearance. The two widows were so frightened at his sight that the elder one closed her eyes, and so gave birth to a blind son, Dhritarashtra; the younger turned so pale that her son was called Pandu, 'the pale.' Satyawati wished for a child without blemish, but the elder widow shrank from a second association with Vyasa and made a slave girl take her place. From this girl was born a son who was named Vidura. These children were brought up by their uncle Bhishma, who acted as regent. When they came of age, Dhritarashtra, because he was blind was deemed incapable of reigning and Pandu came to the throne.

Pandu for an unknown reason (some suggest that 'Pandu' hints at leprosy), retired to the forest and Dhritarashtra then became king.

Pandu had two wives, one of whom was Kunti or Pritha, daughter of Sura, King of the Surasenas and the other was Madri. Kunti before her marriage had borne a son, Karna, by Surya, the Sun god, through a boon granted to her by rishi Durvasa whereby she could beget a child by invoking a god of her choice. Fearing consequences Kunti had placed the child in a basket and floated it down the river. The child was brought up by a charioteer and his wife. Karna was to play a great role in the lives of his stepbrothers, allied as he was, through circumstances, with the opposing camp.

Either through disease or the curse passed upon him, Pandu did not consort with his wives. He retired into solitude in the Himalaya mountains, and there he

died. His wives, who accompanied him, bore him five sons whose paternity is attributed to different gods. Pandu acknowledged them and they received the patronymic of Pandava. Kunti was the mother of the three elder sons and Madri of the two younger. Yudhishtira (firm in fight) the eldest, was son of Dharma, the judge of the dead and is considered a symbol of manly firmness, justice, and integrity. Bhima or Bhimasena (the terrible), the second, was son of Vayu, the god of the wind. He was noted for his strength, daring, and brute courage. Arjuna (the bright or silvery), the third, was son of Indra, the god of the sky. He is the most prominent character, if not the hero, of the poem. He is delineated as brave, high-minded, generous, tender-hearted and chivalric. Nakula and Sahadeva, the fourth and fifth sons, were the twin children of Madri by the Ashwini Kumaras (who in turn were the twin sons of Surya, the sun). They were brave and amiable, but they do not occupy as prominent positions as their elder brothers.

Dhritarashtra, who reigned at Hastinapura, had a hundred sons and one daughter named Dushala by his wife Gandhari. Known as Kauravas (descended from their ancestor Kuru) the eldest of them, Duryodhana (hard to subdue) was their leader, a bold, crafty and malicious man. While the Pandu princes were still young, they were brought to Dhritarashtra, who took charge of them, showed them great kindness, and had them educated with his own sons. Differences and dislikes soon arose and the juvenile emulation and rivalry of the princes ripened into bitter hatred on the part of the Kauravas. This erupted into an open fight when Dhritarashtra nominated Yudhishtira as his yuvaraja or heir-apparent.

The jealousy and the opposition of his sons was so great that Dhritarashtra sent the Pandavas away to Varanavata, where they dwelt in retirement. Duryodhana plotted to destroy his cousins by setting fire to their house. All the five brothers were thought to have perished in the fire but they had received timely warning from Vidura, and they escaped to the forest, where they dressed and lived in disguise as Brahmins subsisting on alms.

While the Pandavas were living in the forest they heard that Drupada, king of the Panchalas, had proclaimed a swayamvara (marriage by choice) at which his daughter Draupadi was to select her husband from among the princely suitors. They went there, still disguised as Brahmins. Arjuna bent the mighty bow

which had defied the strength of the Kauravas and all other competitors, and the Pandavas were victorious over every opponent. They threw off their disguise and Draupadi was won by Arjuna. On their arrival home, they told Kunti that they had made a great acquisition, and she unwittingly directed them to share it among them. The mother's command could not be evaded, and Vyasa confirmed her direction. So Draupadi became the wife of all the five brothers.

This public appearance revealed the existence of the Pandavas. Their uncle Dhritarashtra recalled them to his court and divided his kingdom between his own sons and nephews. His sons received Hastinapura, and the chief city given to his nephews was Indraprastha on the river Yamuna. The reign of Yudhishtira was a pattern of justice and wisdom. Having conquered many countries, he announced his intention of performing the Rajasuya sacrifice, thus setting up a claim to universal dominion, or at least to be a king over kings. This served to further fan the hatred and envy of the sons of Dhritarashtra who induced their father to invite the Pandavas to Hastinapura.

The Kauravas had laid their plot, and insidiously prevailed upon Yudhishtira to gamble. His opponent was Shakuni, uncle of the Kaurava princes, a great gambler and a cheat. Yudhishtira lost his all: his wealth, his palace, his kingdom, his brothers, himself and last of all, their wife. Draupadi was brought into the assembly as a slave, and when she rushed out she was dragged back again by her hair by Dussasana, an insult for which Bhima vowed to drink his blood. Duryodhana also insulted her by wanting to seat her upon his thigh, and Bhima vowed that he would smash that thigh. Both these vows were fulfilled later (See Performing Arts: Theatre – Urubhanga).

Through the interference and commands of Dhritarashtra the possessions of Yudhishtira were restored to him. But he was once more tempted to play, upon the condition that if he lost, he and his brothers should pass 12 years in the forest, and should remain incognito during the 13th extra year. He was again the loser, and retired with his brothers and wife into exile. In the 13th year they entered the service of the king of Virata in disguise – Yudhishtira as a Brahmin, Bhima as a cook; Arjuna as a eunuch and teacher of music and dancing; Nakula as a horse-trainer; and Sahadeva as a herdsman. Draupadi also took service as attendant and needlewoman of the queen, Sudesha-

na. The five princes each assumed two names, one for use among themselves and one to be used in public.

The beauty of Draupadi attracted Kichaka, brother of the queen, and the chief man in the kingdom. He tried to seduce her and Bhima killed him. The relatives of Kichaka were about to burn Draupadi on his funeral pyre but Bhima appeared as a wild Gandharva and rescued her. The brothers grew in favour, and rendered great assistance to the king in repelling the attacks of the king of Trigarta and the Kauravas.

The time of exile having expired, the princes made themselves known and Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, received Uttara, the king's daughter, in marriage. The Pandavas were now determined to recover of their kingdom. The king of Virata became their ally, and preparations for the war began. Allies were sought on all sides. Krishna and Balarama as relatives of both parties were reluctant to fight. Krishna gave Arjuna and Duryodhana a choice: they could choose to have him (Krishna) unarmed on their side or they could choose a large army. Arjuna chose Krishna and Duryodhana joyfully accepted the army. Krishna agreed to act as Arjuna's charioteer. In this capacity he revealed the philosophy of the divine song, *Bhagavad Gita*, when the rival armies were drawn up for battle at Kurukshetra. Many battles followed. The army of Duryodhana was commanded in succession by his great uncle Bhishma, Drona, military preceptor, Karna, king of Anga, and Salya, king of Madra and brother of Madri. Bhishma was wounded by Arjuna but survived for a time. All the others fell in succession and at length only three of the Kuru warriors – Kripa, Ashwatthama, and Kritavarma were left alive with Duryodhana. Bhima and Duryodhana fought in single combat with maces, and Duryodhana had his thigh broken and was mortally wounded.

The three surviving Kauravas fell upon the camp of the Pandavas and destroyed five of their children and all the army except the five brothers themselves. These five boys were sons of Draupadi, one by each of the five brothers – Yudhishtira's son Prativindhya, Bhima's Sutasoma, Arjuna's Srutakirti, Nakula's Satanika, and Sahadeva's Srutakarman.

Yudhishtira and his brothers then went to Hastinapura and after a reconciliation with Dhritarashtra, Yudhishtira was crowned king. But he was greatly depressed and troubled at the loss of kindred and friends. Soon after he ascended

the throne, the Ashwamedha yajna or sacrifice was performed with great ceremony and the Pandavas lived in peace and prosperity, ritually praying for Karna, discovered too late, to be their eldest brother.

The old blind king Dhritarashtra could not forget or forgive the loss of his sons, and mourned especially for Duryodhana. Bitter reproaches and taunts passed between him and Bhima. At length he, with wife Gandhari, Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, and some of his ministers, retired to a hermitage in the wood, where after two years they perished in a forest fire. Deep sorrow and remorse seized the Pandavas and after a while Yudhishtira abdicated his throne and departed with his brothers to the Himalayas, in order to reach the heaven of Indra on Mount Meru. A dog followed them from Hastinapura.

Sins and moral defects now proved fatal and only Yudhishtira was left. He went on alone with the dog until he reached the gate of heaven. He was invited in but he refused unless his brothers and Draupadi and his faithful dog were also received. On being told that they were admitted, he entered but to his dismay found Duryodhana and his enemies but not his brothers or Draupadi.

He refused to remain in heaven without them, and was taken to the jaws of hell, where he beheld terrible sights and heard anguished wailing. He recoiled, but familiar voices implored him to remain and assuage their sufferings. He triumphed in this final trial, and resolved to share the fate of his friends in hell rather than abide with their foes in heaven. Having endured this supreme test, the whole scene was shown to be the effect of maya or illusion, and he and his brothers and friends dwelt with Indra in happiness forever.

Ceremonies and Rituals

ACHAMANA

The drinking of water from the palm of the hand to purify oneself before commencing a worship or a ritual. A bit of water is taken in the right palm and drunk. This action is carried out three times chanting the names of God: Vishnu, Keshava, Narayana and Madhava.

AGNI PARINAYANA

Circumambulation or going round the sacred fire, a most important ritual common to all Hindu marriages.

AGUNIDENA

The presentation of opium, tobacco and the like to the bridegroom's father by the bride's father.

AGYA KADHANA

Ceremonial hair-dressing of the bridegroom before the wedding ceremony.

ASHWAMEDHA YAJNA

Horse sacrifice, regarded as the most important and celebrated of all Vedic rituals performed by kings. Under this a horse is set to wander by itself. If on its wanderings it is captured by anyone, the army accompanying the animal fights and vanquishes the person and the horse moves on. A year later, the horse returns to the owner king. Thus the king established his sovereignty over all the land traversed by the horse. After this the horse is ritually sacrificed. Ashwamedha finds frequent mention in both the great epics.

EKADASHI

An important day in the Hindu almanac, it occurs on the eleventh day after a new moon or full moon (See Cosmos: Calendar). On this day, religious people observe a vrata or a day of fast and worship in honour of Vishnu. The aim is to liberate oneself ultimately from the cycle of birth and death.

ISHTAKA

Bricks. As the sacrificial fire according to the *Vedas* needed pits of specified dimensions, the bricks too had to be of various shapes and dimensions. The pits were known as agni-chayana.

KARTIKA SNANA

A religious observance in the months of Ashwin and Kartika (See Cosmos: Calendar) beginning on one purnima (full moon) and ending on the next. It begins with an early morning dip in a pond or river followed by prayers and offerings to Janardhana Vishnu to gain merit in return.

KULACHARA

Religious practices, rituals and customs traditionally observed in families.

NAIVEDYA

The ritual food offering made to god which is then distributed to devotees as 'prasad' or holy offering. Prasad means the gift of God's grace.

PRANAPRATISHTA

Lit. 'empowering with life.' A ritual with special ceremonies and invocations that breathe life into an idol of a Hindu god or goddess before preparing it for worship. The stapati (sculptor) of the image usually carved the eyes last and bound them with a cloth. A mirror was held before the deity's face before the cloth was ceremonially unbound so that his/her visage would be the first to be 'seen'. After Pranapratishta, a



Kumara bhojana, a part of Upanayana ceremony

stapati was not allowed to approach the image directly. At major temples, the king usually performed this pranapratishta.

PUJA

The offering of flowers, leaves, fruits, sweet, water, milk incense accompanied by chanting and singing to god. Puja is part of Dravidian culture; for the Aryans used to appease their gods with havans (ritual fire) and yajna (ritual sacrifice). Today in the Hindu rituals both puja and homa (fire sacrifice) are included though in the Bhakti cult the stress is on puja.

PURATANA KUMBHA/KALASHA

A water-filled pot with mango leaves and a coconut placed on its mouth is regarded as auspicious and forms an essential part of most rituals. The kumbha may be found sculpted on temple pillars. The kumbha symbolises the universe and water, life. In many rituals the kumbha itself is worshipped.

SAMSKARAS

The word that comes nearest in meaning to samskara is the English 'sacrament.' These are the rituals and sacrifices that a Hindu is expected to perform and these samskaras are a part of him even as he is conceived, delivered, during his life on earth as a child, a youth, an adult, right to the time of his death and his funeral ceremonies and the observance of his death anniversary.

Samskaras have several objectives; the first and the most easily understood of which is to remove all hindrances, evil or otherwise, that tend to plague human life from time to time. The idea is to propitiate the gods to make life easier.

Samskaras are carried out not just for material gain. It could be for offspring, for land, for health or even for winning disputes – anything that contributes to happiness and prosperity. Incidentally, samskaras also give an opportunity for social expression of a man's emotions for there are ceremonies for sombre occasions as well as those for celebrations. Samskaras are also a yardstick of attainment of social status. The boy who has his Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) acquires the right to study the *Vedas* and chant the Gayatri mantra (See Gayatri).

There are, in all, over 40 samskaras. These describe the rituals and ceremonies connected with conception, birth, naming of the infant, first outing, first feeding, first tonsure, thread ceremony, beginning of formal education and so on.

The rituals connected with samskaras involve both secular and religious ceremonies. There are certain common constituents like Agni, (fire) Varuna or water sanctified often with mantras (incantations) and various symbols. These are some of the meanings and symbols of the more important samskaras, in the chrono-

logical order in which they occur in a life.

PRE-NATAL SAMSKARAS

Garbhandhana, the conception ceremony. The mantras chanted during this samskara are essentially prayers to God to help the bride conceive a healthy son. Procreation is looked upon as an essential duty of the Hindu to repay his threefold debts to devas, rishis and to man.

Pumsavana, performed in the first trimester or early second trimester of pregnancy usually on a day of a 'male' nakshatra (See Cosmos: Astrology). As part of the rituals, as prayers are chanted for a worthy son, a few drops of juice from the stem of the banyan tree are dropped into the right nostril of the pregnant woman.

Seemantonayana, the third of the prenatal samskaras is performed between the fifth and eighth month of pregnancy. The hair of the pregnant woman is parted at the centre of the head as a symbolic warding off of undesirable shocks to the mother-to-be and to ensure a well-proportioned child. The deity invoked is Raka (presiding over the full moon). Music, specially the veena is played for the mother and certain mantras like 'Purushastotram' or 'male incantations' are read out to her during her term of pregnancy.

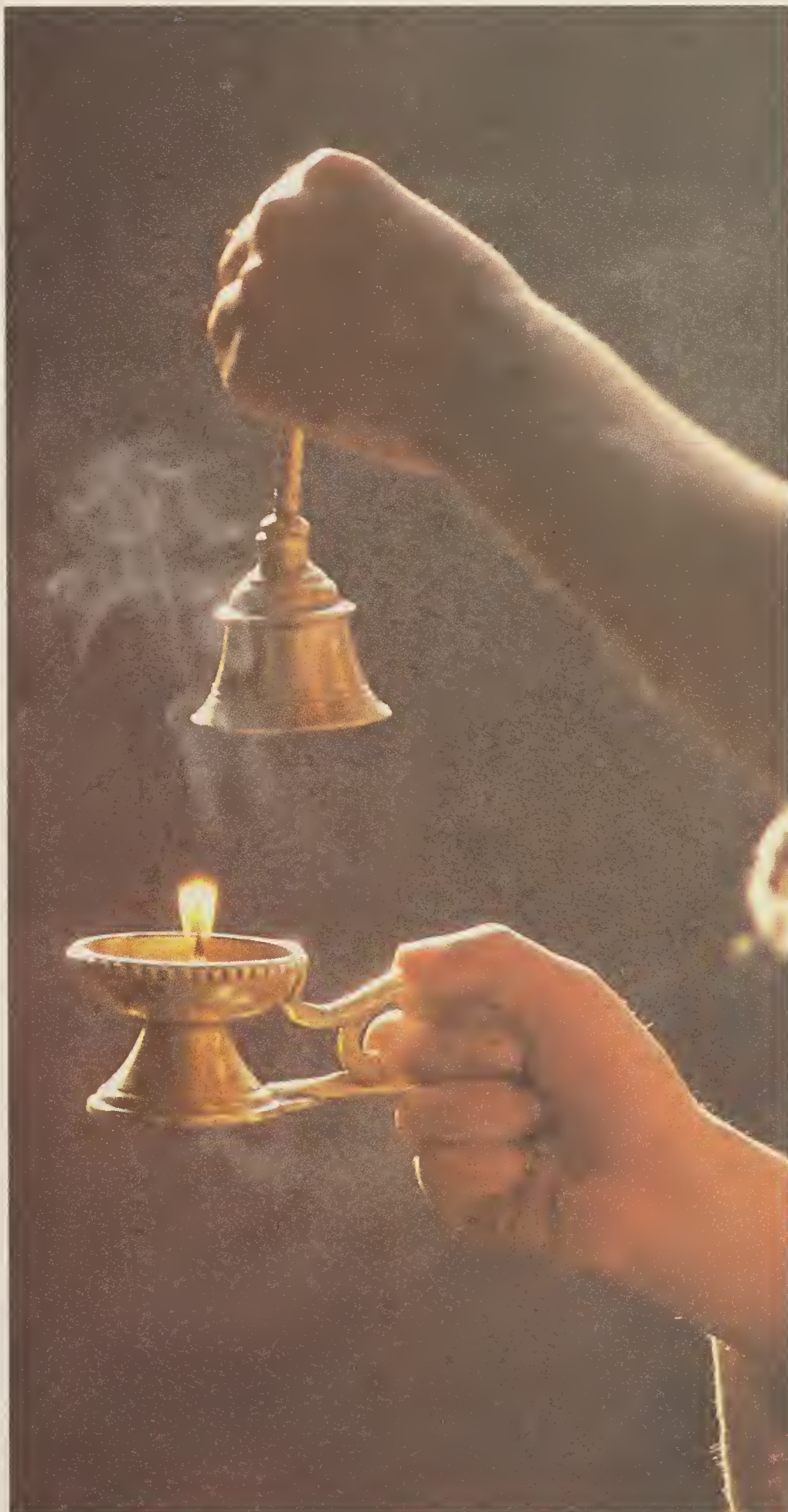
There are also other social and light-hearted ceremonies associated with pregnancy, with each community having its variations.

With all these heralding ceremonies when the first born arrives (especially if it is a male child) he is known as the 'Seemanthaputran' and he has certain exclusive ritual rites in the family.

POST NATAL SAMSKARAS

Jatakarma, performed immediately after delivery even before the umbilical cord of the child is severed. The father looks at the face of the newborn and at once redeems his debt to his ancestors. He has to take a dip in the nearest lake, pond or river and then perform *danas* and *dharms* or alms-giving and other pious acts (See Concepts) for this is said to protect the child from evil and earn the father great merit for future births at the same time.

Namakarana, a simple religious ceremony but one of great social significance. It is performed on the 11th or 12th day (sometimes even later) of birth and the child is given a name. In many cases a *pujari* or *pandit* (priest) is asked to 'astrologically' locate a propitious name or the first syllable (the parents in this case choose a name beginning with the mentioned syllable). In many parts of south India, the first son is automatically given



Arati, an integral part of puja

the paternal grandfather's name and the second son the maternal grandfather's. The first two daughters are named for the grandmothers. It is also not uncommon to find children being named after their nakshatras or stars of birth like Swati, Ashwini, Revati, Chitra and so on (See Cosmos: Astrology).

Annaprasana, a ceremony in which rice (anna) is first fed to the child. In many families, babies are not allowed even a taste of grains, pulses and salt till the ceremony is over. This is carried out either in the temple or at home. This ceremony is meant to ensure that the child develops good digestive powers together with good thoughts and good talent.

Normally Annaprasana takes place when a child is six months old and ready to be weaned. In any case, the ceremony should be held before the child becomes mobile and picks up things to eat!

Aksharabhyasa, though not a major samskara this ceremony takes place before the child begins his formal education, more specifically, his writing. Ideally this would be held on the tenth day of Dussehra or Vijaya Dashami (See Festivals). The child is seated before the family deity and his hand is guided over a 'plateau' of grain (or rice) placed before him, to write the first letter of the alphabet or the sacred syllable 'Om' in Sanskrit.

Chaula, the first tonsure of the child. Till this time, the child's hair is left uncut, it is generally carried out in the third year. Called 'Mundan' in north India this is also a social occasion with feasting and celebration. Some families restrict the tonsure to male children. In the south, it is considered auspicious to get the first tonsure done at temples like Palani and Tirupati. The belief is that removing the hair gives added strength to the child (See Holy Places: Temples - Palani, Tirupati).

Upanayana, lit. to take the child to the teacher or to the Gayatri mantra, an essential of the thread ceremony performed in the 8th, 11th or 12th year calculated from the date of conception. The ceremony for the male child, second only to his marriage gives him a 'second birth' with his father for a guru and his mother as Gayatri (See Concepts). He is now ready to study the *Vedas* and participate in Vedic functions. The materials used in this ceremony are full of mystical significance. The yajnopavita or holy thread comprises three strands, symbolising the three gunas—sattva, rajas and tamas. It is also a reminder of the three-fold debt to one's rishis and gods (See Concepts; Philosophy) and the three

Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Vivaha, marriage. The giving of a girl in marriage (Kanyadaan) is regarded as a great act, so much so that it is said to continuously give benefits to the girl's parents for 21 rebirths. The chief objective of marriage is the performance of dharma and procreation. The ceremony involves a number of symbolism. In Panigrahana, the groom takes the bride's hand and points to a newborn as he recites a mantra (incantation) by which he promises her equal rights, happiness and fidelity. In the Sthalipaka ceremony he says, "I add my breath to yours, my flesh to yours, my skin to your skin." When the bride mounts the grinding stone, the groom asks her to "be firm as a rock." Pointing to the pole star, Dhruva, he says, "You are steadfast and I see you as the firm one. Live with me a hundred autumns" (See Dhruva). At the Laja homa, the offering of fried gram (poha), the bride aided by her brother prays for her groom's long life.

The Saptapadi or the seven auspicious steps symbolise the desire for orderly prosperity. All vows and mantras at Hindu marriages are made before Agni, the ritual fire (thus Agni sakshi or the witness of the Fire God). Exchange of garlands, tying mangalsutra (tali) or 'auspicious thread' are other important ceremonies in a marriage though not prescribed by samskaras. These again differ from region to region and community to community.

Antyeshti, funeral. It is believed that samskaras done when one is alive, help to conquer earth, those performed after death help to conquer heaven. The burning of a corpse is not an end in itself but a landmark in the continuous cycle of birth and death. The soul has to be helped to obtain a new body and join the pitris (ancestors).

The gift of a cow (godaan) called Vaitarni is propitious for she is supposed to guide the dead through the stream of the underworld. The act of cremation itself is deemed a sacrifice. Shedding copious tears is said to hinder the departed soul's entry into heaven, thus the reading of *Puranas* (especially *Garuda Purana* which details life after death) is recommended. All funeral rites are carried out by the eldest son, or a close kinsman. The ashes are immersed in a holy river.

Sraadha, a religious ceremony carried out annually in propitiation of departed ancestors (pitris). A son performs sraadha for his father each year on the tithi (See Cosmos: Calendar) or day of death. At the same time, he also performs sraadha for three generations of his ancestors. Among the important items of this ceremony are

arghaya (water offering), havana (fire offering), Brahmana bhojan (the feeding of Brahmins), pindadana (symbolic feeding of the ancestors), dakshina (money and other offerings) and tarpana (the actual act of propitiation). The durbha or kusa grass and til (sesame seeds) are two important materials in the tarpana.

Reformist Movements

ARYA SAMAJ

Founded by Dayanand Saraswati in Bombay in 1857. The Samaj differs from Hinduism in that it gives less importance to the *Puranas* and Puranic gods. The Samaj accepts the mantras (the holy chants) of the *Vedas* as scripture. Image worship is frowned upon and the belief is that the varna or caste order, (See Philosophy) of a person is not determined by birth but by the nature of the profession or lifestyle adopted by him.

The Arya Samaj was mainly founded to bring about social reform. It spoke out against child marriages, advocated women's education and widow remarriage. Although initially the Samaj promoted Sanskrit studies, a breakaway group went in for western education and founded the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) schools and colleges. The more conservative group continued to believe in Vedic ideals and founded the gurukul (traditional school) in Hardwar in 1902.

Today the Arya Samaj has over 3,000 branches in India and abroad (See People: Great Indians).

BRAHMO SAMAJ

This progressive reform movement was started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Calcutta in 1828 (See People: Great Indians). However the founder left for England in 1830 and died there three years later and the movement began to languish till 1843 when Debendranath Tagore along with 19 others formally became Brahmo Samajis. Keshub Chunder Sen, a dynamic member of the Samaj along with his followers broke away and formed Bharatvarshiya Samaj in 1866. Still later another radical broke away to form Sadharana Brahmo Samaj in 1878.

There are an estimated 80 branches of all the three groups of the Samaj in India and 34 outside.



Namaaz, ritual Muslim prayers

ISLAM

AHL-UL-KITAB/AHLE KITAB

Lit. the people of the book. A term used in the *Quran* for Jews and Christians as believers in a 'revealed' religion. Muslims are 'People of the book.'

AQIQA

Birth ceremonies are based on traditions and ethics of the Muslims in India.

When a child is born, he is washed properly and bound in swaddling clothes and carried to the assembly of male relatives and friends. The maulvi or priest whispers the Azan or the call (Allah is great...) in the infant's right ear and the Iqamah, which is the Azan with the words, 'we are standing up for prayers' in the left ear. The maulvi then chews a little piece of date and inserts it in the infant's mouth. This custom is based on the example set by Mohammed at the birth of his grandson Hasan.

After the ceremony is over, alms are distributed to the poor and fatihas (prayers) are recited for the health and prosperity of the child. According to tradition the amount of silver given in alms should equal the weight of the hair on the infant's head, the child's head being shaved for the purpose, on the seventh day in a ceremony called Aqiqa. Some families circumcise their sons at this time of Aqiqa or they may do it later but before he is ten.

AYISHA AND HAFSAH

Ayisha and Hafsa were Mohammed's third and fourth wives and were good friends. Ayisha died at Medina in AH 1158 (AD 678) at the age of 67 and earned the title Ummu'l Muminim amongst the Sunnis, which means mother of the believers.

Hafsa was the daughter of Umar, the Prophet's close associate, and hence a person of great political importance. She was an early convert to Islam. During the Prophet's lifetime, she was a person of considerable influence in his counsels. She survived Mohammed by some years and recorded several of his sayings.

AZABUL QAB

'The punishment of the grave.' That all people, believers or not, undergo some punishment in the grave is a fundamental belief of the Muslims.

DEATH

A dying man asks for forgiveness from God. Great respect is shown to the dead.

FOOD

Muslims are not allowed to eat pork or car-

nivorous animals. Halal is the special method by which the animal is slaughtered. While killing it, the word Bismillah is chanted to remind men that the animal's life belonged to Allah, and they are only taking it for food. Alcohol is prohibited.

ISLAM

The name of the religion (surrender to God) practised by the Muslims. The Muslims believe that Islam as a religion was brought to the world by Adam, and God sent his messengers to different regions at different times, to purify this religion and preach it. Mohammed came last and gave final shape to the religion which already existed. The five pillars of Islamic faith are the Shahda, acceptance of one God, Allah and Mohammed as his Prophet; the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime; fasting during the month of Ramzan (Roza); praying five times a day (Namaaz) and donating a portion of income to the poor (Zakat).

JANNAH

The Muslim Paradise is called Jannah or 'the garden'. There are eight paradises mentioned in the *Quran* which Muslim Divines hold to be eight different stages of heaven. They are Jannatu'l Khud – the Garden of Eternity; Daru's Salam – the Dwelling of Peace; Daru'l Qadzar – the Dwelling Which Abides; Jannatu'l Adu – the Garden of Eden; Jannatu'l Mawa – the Garden of Refuge; Jannatu'm Naim – the Garden of Delight; Iiliyu – which is undefined and Jannatu'l Firdaus – the Garden of Paradise.

There is a river in Paradise called Kausar which, according to the Prophet, was given to him and his people. Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and on it are birds whose necks are like the necks of camels.

Paradise according to Muslim tradition is not an austere place but one which is luxurious and fulfills the dreams of every man. For instance the Prophet says that if a man in Paradise asks to be allowed to cultivate land because, though everything is provided there, he is fond of cultivating, god will give him permission. The cultivator will sow and the seed will grow, ripen and be reaped and stand in sheaves like mountains. Thus, every man's paradise will be perfect for him.

JEHANNAM

Seven divisions of Muslim hell, allotted to wicked Muslims and other non-believers.

JIHAD

Arabic, mutual effort. A united, communal vow or participation, to exterminate

unbelievers; a holy war, a war against infidels; a term used by Turks, Persians and Mongols to justify their incursions into other lands.

JINAZAH

Jinazah or Janazah are terms used both for the bier and the funeral service in India. Women do not attend the funeral and the mourners walk behind the corpse as it is a belief that no one should precede the bier as the angels go before it. It is considered to be a very meritorious act to carry the bier. Four relatives or close friends of the deceased carry it and are periodically relieved by four others.

A funeral service is not recited in the graveyard, it being too polluted a place for so sacred a ritual. A mosque or an open ground near the home of the deceased or graveyard is usually chosen for the occasion. The chief mourner of the corpse is the nearest relative. The family Imam (priest) recites the prayers, the other mourners arrange themselves in three, five or seven rows opposite the corpse with their faces towards Mecca.

After the recitation of the prayers – the Takbir, Subhan, Salam and Dua – the corpse is placed on its back in the grave with its face towards Mecca and the bands of the shroud having been loosed, the grave is closed.

After the burial the assembly offers a fatiha (the first chapter of the *Quran*) in the name of the deceased. After this food is distributed to the poor and to religious mendicants as a propitiatory offering in the name of the deceased.

JUMMAH

Arabic. 'Jumma' or the Day of Assembly. The Muslim Sabbath on which they assemble in the Jama Masjid or chief mosque and recite prayers and listen to the Khutbah (oration) at the time of the midday prayer, in the *Book of Traditions* Mohammed claims to have established Friday as a day of worship by divine command and there is a certain hour on Friday, known only to God on which a Muslim obtains all the good he asks of the Almighty.

It is also said that whoever bathes on a Friday and comes to prayer with humility and on foot, every step he takes gets the reward of a full year's worship and a year's fasting and praying.

KAFIR

Unbeliever.

KHUTBAH

The sermon or oration delivered on Friday at the time of Zuhr, the meridian prayer. It is also recited on the two great festivals, Id uz

Zuha and Id u'l Adha, after sunrise. The Friday prayers and sermon are established on the authority of the *Quran*.

From the *Sunnah* or *Traditions* it appears that Mohammed used frequently to deliver a Khutbah, and that it was not the studied and formal oration that it is today.

On Friday after the usual ablutions and *Sunnah* prayers, the Khatib or preacher seats himself on the pulpit while the muezzin proclaims the Azan. After this the preacher stands up and delivers his oration. The Khutbah is supposed to be delivered in Arabic and include prayers for the Prophet and the companions.

MAHADI

'Mahadi' literally means the 'directed one' and hence is one who is fit to direct others, a guide or a leader. The Muslims believe that he is a leader who will appear in the last days of the Earth, before the Day of Judgement. According to the Shias (a Muslim sect) he has already appeared in the person of Muhammad Abu'l Qasim, the 12th imam, who is believed to be concealed in some secret place till the day of his manifestation before the end of the world, but the Sunnis (also a Muslim sect) say he has not yet appeared.

MAHRAM

Lit. unlawful. A near relative whom it is unlawful to marry. Mohammed enjoined that every woman performing pilgrimage should have a mahram with her night and day to prevent scandal.

MASHRU & GHAIR-UL-MASHRU

Muslim law has two distinct categories - Mashru or lawful and Ghair-ul-mashru or unlawful. There are five categories into which Mashru falls.

Farz or duty that cannot be denied or disobeyed. These are the duties which have without doubt been enjoined in the *Quran*.

Wajib or duty about whether it is enjoined in the *Quran* or in a tradition of undoubted authenticity. These are obligatory though not mandatory. *Sunnah* is what was practised by the Prophet.

Mustahab. The fourth category consists of those things which Mohammed and his companions sometimes, but not unfavourably, did.

Mubah is what it is desirable should be performed but can be omitted without sin.

There are three classes of the unlawful: *Mufsid* is a mortal sin, that which is most corrupting and evil; *Haram* is that which is definitely forbidden and *Makruh* is undesirable – it is generally regarded as unclean.

These distinctions and subdivisions apply to all branches of Muslim law, secular and divine. All duties, the ordinary ones of life as well as those relating to devotion to God come within the distinction of lawful and unlawful. The two common divisions of law are *Ilmu'l-Katam* or *Aga'id* which embraces all matters of faith and *Ilmu'z-Zigh* which includes matters of practice. (See Law)

MASJID OR MOSQUE

Lit. 'the place of protection.' Generally built of stone or brick in the form of a square enclosing an open courtyard. This is surrounded by cloisters for students. In the centre of the wall facing Mecca is the *mihrab* or niche which marks the direction of the holy Kabah at Mecca and to the right of this is the pulpit, called the *mimbar* from which the Friday oration is recited. There is usually a large tank in the courtyard at which the worshippers perform their ablutions and a minaret from which the *Azan* or congregational prayers are called.

The chief officer of a mosque is usually the man who leads the prayer but there are usually a number of *maulvi's* and learned men who are attached to the mosque for the instruction of the students. There is also a *muezzin* whose duty it is to call the *Azan* and a trustee or superintendent called the *mutzawalli*.

Women, although they may visit a masjid, are not encouraged to attend prayers in it, for Mohammed said, "Do not prevent your women from coming to the Masjids, but their homes are better for them."

Praying in a mosque is highly recommended by Mohammed and he says, "The prayers of a man in his own house are equal to the reward of one prayer. Prayers in a masjid near his home are equal to 25 prayers and in time they are equal to 500 prayers and in Jerusalem to 50,000, and in Madina, 50,000 and at the Kabah, 100,000."

MIMBAR

Pulpit, used for the recital of prayers by the Kazi on Fridays in the chief mosque of the area; usually has three steps. It is said that the Prophet, when addressing people, usually stood on the top step, Abu Bakr on the second and Umar on the third. The Prophet's followers stood on the second and that is fixed as the place to recite the *Khutbah* on Fridays and on the two great festivals (See *Khutbah*).

MOHAMMED

Mohammed was born around 570 AD in Makkah (Mecca) now in Saudi Arabia, the posthumous son of Abdullah (servant of

God) and Aminah (serene peaceful), of the Quraish tribe. At that time Mecca was a prosperous centre of the caravan trade between the countries bordering the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Kabah was a sacred sanctuary, an ancient pilgrimage centre, which made Mecca prosperous, and encouraged trade.

Mohammed's childhood was one of sorrow and loss. When he was tiny he was placed with a foster-mother, Halima as Aminah died when Mohammed was six. While in Halima's care, two angels are believed to have taken out his heart, cleaned it and put it back. At first he was cared for by his grandfather and later went to live with his uncle Abu Talib, to whom he was apprenticed as a camel driver. From the age of 12 he travelled to Basra and beyond and saw and learned much about the Jews and the Christians. For his hard work and honesty, he was called *Al-Amin* (trustworthy) and *As-Sadiq* (truthful).

He was employed by Khadijah wealthy widow, to look after her business and trade. They were later married. She was a faithful and sympathetic wife who in difficult times gave him moral support, and apparently they had a happy married life though she was older by nearly twenty years. From this marriage three daughters survived and were with him in his later years. Khadijah is specially revered by Muslims as Islam's first convert. Being secure in business and free from worldly cares, Mohammed developed contemplative habits. The extremes of wealth and poverty, the injustice in the country all compelled him to think in the seclusion of the desert mountains.

In the revelations, Mohammed was sometimes spoken of as a messenger of God, and sometimes as a forecaster, warning sinners of retribution from God if they did not amend their ways. He believed that these revelations were the actual words of God, revealed to him by an angel, and they were not of his composition.

The Arab world then comprised of nomadic tribes who worshipped many deities. Undoubtedly many of them were familiar with the *Bible* and even read the *Old Testament* in Hebrew. The Arabs who lived in urban areas were polytheistic and they traded in idols, which was an important source of income. But there seems to have been some unconscious acceptance of a supreme deity called Allah. The other gods and goddesses were supposed to be intermediaries who interceded with the supreme God on behalf of the devotees.

In Mohammed's fortieth year something happened which changed the course not only of his life but of millions of people. He received the call to proclaim the worship of the One God (Allah). He received the messages frequently for some time and finally he was told to convey them to his fellowmen.

At first very few people believed that Mohammed was a prophet. Amongst the believers were his wife, two friends Abu Bakr, Uthman and a former slave called Zaid, whom he had freed and adopted as his son. These followers were known as Muslims which means they 'gave' themselves to Allah in peace.

The merchants resisted this new code of conduct and the religion which expected men to use their wealth generously for the welfare of the poor. Mohammed spoke mesmerically and the people grew afraid that either he was possessed or was a dangerous revolutionary. At first Abu Talib, Mohammed's uncle offered him protection, though he had not himself converted to Islam. Unfortunately in 619, both Abu Talib and Khadijah died and Mohammed and his followers were forced to live in a ghetto.

The persecution and hostility of the traders made it impossible for Mohammed to preach in Mecca. He emigrated with his friends to Medina, a fertile oasis. This migration called the *Hijrah* became the event which is the beginning of the Islamic era or calendar (1 AH after *Hijrah*), 622 AD. Mohammed settled in Medina (Yathrib) as the governor of the city at the invitation of some inhabitants who had become Muslims the previous year. They accepted Mohammed as Prophet, specially because they had heard from the local Jewish clans that a messiah was expected.

After a year or two, the people of Mecca started raiding Medina. They far outnumbered Medinite Muslims. But after prolonged battles spread over seven years, Mohammed's men, called the *Zakhat* were finally victorious and they took Mecca in AD. 630. Mohammed treated his enemies generously and most of them became Muslims. Many tribes all over Arabia also joined his federation and became Muslims. His success and power now established, Mohammed became the unquestioned head of the Arab state.

Entering the Kabah in Mecca, he smashed the idols. From then on Islam was no longer just a religion but began to develop into a distinct political power. Mohammed was the head of the community of believers, and Islamic social

and religious practices were developed.

Two years later in front of the Kabah, Mohammed again declared before his followers and pilgrims the last message of God: "Today I have fulfilled the extent of my favour towards you. It is my will that Islam be your religion. I have completed my mission. I have left the book of Allah and clear commandments. If you keep them you will never go wrong." The same year Mohammed died (632 AD).

MUT'AH

A marriage contract for a limited period of time, for a certain sum of money. Such marriages are legal among the Shias, though the Sunnis consider them to be unlawful. Mutah marriages have been the subject of great discussion and dissent amongst the Muslims.

NAMAAZ

Persian. Salat (Arabic); more accurately 'service' in English, rather than 'prayer' for which the correct word is 'Dua.' A devout Muslim is required to pray five times a day. Namaaz is the second of the five foundations or pillars of Islam. It is a devotional exercise to be performed in Arabic, in a state of cleanliness, privately, in company or in a mosque, preceded by washing the face, hands and feet. At the time of prayer, the muezzin (crier) ascends the mosque's minaret or goes to the public address system to give the Azan or call to prayer: *Allahu Akbar! La illah Lil Allah Mohammed ur Rasul-ullah*. (God is great! There is no other god but God, Mohammed is God's Prophet). In the early morning, the sentence "Prayers are better than sleep" is added. During congregational prayers, the 'Iqamah' is said, a repeat of the Azan, with the extra words, "Prayers are now ready". The regular prayer then begins.

- *Niyah*, said standing, with hands on either side.
- *Takbir-i-Tabrimah*, with the thumbs touching the earlobes and open palms facing out on each side of the face.
- *Qiyam*, standing position, right hand placed on left. There are sect variations in which the hands may rest on the navel or chest. But all women keep their hands on their chests, eyes down in abasement, during the Qiyam.
- *Takbir-i-Ruku*, said with the head and body bent while standing, hands on knees.
- *Qiyami-Samiullah/Tasmi*, said standing with hands on either side in a natural stance.
- *Takbir-us-Sijdah*, said as the worshipper drops to his knees.
- *Tasbeeh-i-Jalsah*, said when he puts first

his nose and then forehead to the ground.

Takbir-i-Jalsah, said when sitting up again, on heels, hands on thighs (Shias omit the Takbir and say instead, "I rise and sit by the power of god.").

Thereafter variations follow, while seated on heels, with prostrations for each prayer. It closes with the Salam, "Peace be with you" and ends with the Munajat (supplication), in which the hands are raised. They ought to be said in Arabic, though now they are frequently said in the vernacular. But with all the other prayers, the sectarian differences are binding and admit no change.

These daily prayers (Rakas) are called either Farz, Sunnah, Nafi or Witr. Farz are those said to be enjoined by god; Sunnah, those founded on the practice of Mohammed; Nafi, the voluntary practice of two Rakas or more, which may be omitted without sin; Witr, an odd number of Rakas, one, three, five or seven, said after the night prayer. These are distinct divisions of prayer, which begin afresh with the Niyah. Urdu names for the times of prayer are:

Fajr ki Namaz – from dawn to sunrise; Zuhr ki Namaz – when the Sun begins to decline (afternoon); Asr ki Namaaz – mid-day prayer, Maghrib ki Namaz – evening prayer, Isha ki Namaaz – when night has closed in. There are also three voluntary periods, called Ishraq, Zuha and Tahajjud.

NIKAH

Marriage ceremony. Arranged marriage is the usual practice. A young man is supposed to have an unchallengeable first claim to marry his cousin (father's brother's daughter, or father's sister's daughter). The Nikah is extremely simple, and is a basic contract made in a social gathering. The *Quran* is read regarding the duties of married life and its sacredness. No marriage is complete without the giving of the bride price or mehr in money or property. Only a portion may be paid over to her on marriage, the balance can be paid later when the husband dies or divorces her (See Law). A Muslim man can marry a Christian or Jewish woman but the children have to be raised as Muslims. A Muslim woman on the other hand is not supposed to marry outside her religion. According to the *Quran*, a man can marry more than one woman at a time, the limit being four at any given time. The only condition placed is that the husband treat all his wives on equal footing.

In the matter of divorce, the right of a husband to repudiate a wife by merely declaring his intention and without intervention of the court is affirmed in several

passages in the *Quran*. A certain time has to lapse (iddat or period of waiting) before the wife can remarry. Reconciliation has to be tried, but if all efforts fail, divorce or talak is granted. A triple repudiation made at one and the same time also constitutes a divorce, and is acceptable by all legal schools.

A wife has restricted rights and may not divorce her husband by declaration but by agreement have the marriage rescinded by paying him compensation or by returning her dowry (See Law: Talak).

PROPHETESSES

It is said that only three women have been prophetesses: Sarah the wife of Abraham, the mother of Moses, and Mary, daughter of Imran. Sarah received by revelation the news of Isaac's (Ishaque) birth. The birth of Moses was divinely communicated to his mother and Mary was told by an angel of the birth of Jesus (the Annunciation as Christians call it).

QABR

A grave, a tomb. Also mazhar.

THE QURAN

The *Quran*, the sacred book of the Muslims, is derived from the word *Quran* which in Arabic means 'to recite.' It is believed to be a revelation from Allah, and not a collection of ideas from Mohammed the Prophet. Muslims believe that Allah originally deposited the *Quran* engraved on a tablet in heaven, and that it has always existed from the beginning of time. It was the angel Jibreel (Gabriel) who revealed it to Mohammed and commanded him again and again to recite it and also taught him the order of the verses.

Muslims try to memorise the whole *Quran* and honour those who have done it with the title of Hafiz. During the five daily prayers, the Muslims repeat in short the first chapter of the *Quran*.

The *Quran* is divided into 114 surahs, or chapters. These are arranged in descending order of length, the longest near the beginning and the shortest at the end. Most of the surahs start with the words *In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate...* The surahs are divided into verses (ayat) meaning wonder.

RAMZAN

Ramzan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and a strict fast is observed from dawn to dusk on each day of this month. The word 'Ramzan' comes from 'Ramz' – to burn – because, before the calendar was changed it used to occur at the height of summer or because fasting burns away the sins of mankind.

The observance of this month is one of the five pillars of practical religion and its excellence is much extolled by Mohammed in the *Quran* and the *Traditions*. He said that during Ramzan, the gates of Paradise are open and those of Hell shut. Only those who observe the fasts will be permitted to enter the gate of heaven called 'Raiyan.' They will be forgiven all their past sins. He who is sick or upon a journey is exempt from keeping this fast as long as he fasts an equivalent number of days at some other stage of the year. Pregnant or nursing women are also exempt from the fast. During this month, in which not even a drop of water is drunk during the day, 20 additional Rakas or forms of prayer, are repeated after the night prayer, Tarawin. Devout Muslims seclude themselves for some time in a mosque and abstain from worldly thought or conversation.

ROZA

Persian. Arabic Saum. Fasting was highly commended by Mohammed as atonement for sin. The following fasts are based upon the example of the Prophet and are observed by pious Muslims.

Ramzan: This entire month's fast (30 days) is regarded as a divine institution, enjoined in the *Quran* and therefore compulsory.

Ashura: A voluntary fast observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram in the belief that it would cover the sins of the coming year.

The six days following Idu'l-Fitr. Following a fast maintained during Ramzan, it is said to obtain rewards of a continued fast.

Mondays and Thursdays of every week: Recommended as the actions of God's servants are presented at the throne of God on these days. Also the 13th, 14th of each month, days on which Mohammed himself observed fasts. An injunction to one who fasts is not to utter a bad word or raise his voice in strife for it is only then that a fast is acceptable to God.

SHARIAH

The law of Islam, the Shariah is firmly believed to be based on divine revelation from many sources:

- The *Quran*, believed to have always existed in Heaven and revealed gradually to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel.
- The *Sunnah*, practice, habit or custom referring to the Prophet's way of life especially in countless books on what he said or did as a Prophet. The way in which he prayed or fasted or washed before prayer was to be a guide to the Muslims, or serve as a basis for Shariah

Islamic law.

- The *Ijma*, decided by the majority of scholars in the Muslim community well-versed in the *Quran* and *Hadith*.
- *Qiyas*, which draws an analogy between one incident and another, and finds a similar situation in the *Quran* or *Hadith* to solve a problem. For example through the use of Qiyas, the elders were able to compare alcohol with drugs, which is also addictive and harmful for humans. Therefore, they decide that drug taking is against the Shariah.
- *Fiab*, the in-depth study of Islamic Law meaning knowledge or understanding of the collection of laws.

The Shariah is divided into five parts.

- What God has commanded.
- Recommended by God but not obligatory.
- When God has empowered the Muslim to interpret the law according to the context (legally indifferent).
- What God has disapproved of but has not actually forbidden.
- What God has actually forbidden.

The importance of the Shariah lies in the fact that it believed to be a divine commandment to which every Muslim from the highest to the lowest is subject.

SHI'A

The Shi'a or Shia Muslims unlike the Sunnis, believe that the main figure of religious authority is the imam. Mohammed instituted the cycle of initiation for guiding the community by appointing an imam as his successor. The first imam was Ali, who not only was Mohammed's adopted son, but also his son-in-law (by marriage to Fatima). He is supposed to have inherited Mohammed's spiritual qualities. He passed these abilities to his sons Hasan and Hussein, and they to their descendants, in the line of imams. This line of imams according to the Shi'a will continue until the end of the world. Shia Islam arose after the martyrdom of Ali and his son Hussein.

SUFIS

The Sufis were a special class of holy men who either worked silently amongst people or led isolated lives and concentrated on meditation and prayer. They subjected themselves to extreme bodily discipline so that they could enlarge their spiritual vision. They were called Sufis probably because of the fact that they wore rough garments made from wool or suf.

SUNNAH

Sunnah literally means 'a path' or 'a way': used in Islam to express the custom and

manner of life in the tradition which records either the sayings or doings of Mohammed. Consequently, all traditional laws are divided into Sunnatu'l Fil or what Mohammed did, Sunnatu'l Qaul or what he enjoined, Sunnatu't Taqirir or what was done or said in his presence which he did not forbid.

There is another division in the Sunnah between the things the Prophet specifically enjoined, like the calling of the Azan before prayer. These are called Sunnatu'l Hudda or Sunnatu'l Muakkadeh or Sunnahs of Guidance. Those things that have not been emphatically enjoined are called Sunnatu'l-Zaidah.

SUNNIS

The Sunnis who are the majority of the Muslim community, declared that no one could succeed Mohammed as prophet, as according to the *Quran* he was the last messenger of Allah. Subsequently the successor could only be a guardian of the prophetic legacy. By consensus of the leaders (ijma) it was decided to choose a caliph from the Quraish tribe to which Mohammed belonged. This caliph would be responsible for the managing of community affairs and a leader of the believers. It is the example of the 'four rightly guided caliphs,' together with Mohammed who set the example (sunnah) or custom for all later Muslims to imitate and follow. The ijma of the modern day Sunni Muslims seems to be that if the national governments of Muslim states observe Shariah, there is no need for the office of a caliph.

TAVIZ

Amulets are not of Muslim origin but are very popular in Muslim countries. They may have the whole *Quran* written in minute letters, encased in silk or leather, or some chapter or verse only. An amulet may also have some of the names of God or Allah or the Prophets or Saints or the Kalmah or creed, engraved on stones or gold or silver.

Amulets are used as charms which have the power to protect the wearer against evil. They can also be used to protect houses or animals. Strictly, according to the principles of Islam, only the names of God or verses from the *Quran* should be used for amulets.

TILAWAH

'Tilawah' or the recital of the *Quran* has been developed into a science known as 'Ilmu'l-Tajwid.' This includes a knowledge of the peculiarities of the spellings of many of its words; of the qiraat, or various readings; of the ejaculations and responses and

prayers to be said at the close of various readings.

The reading or the recital of the *Quran* should begin with legal ablutions and prayer. The usual prayer is, "I seek protection from God against the cursed Satan" followed by the invocation, "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate."

The most suitable place to read the *Quran* is the mosque and the most auspicious day is a Friday, Monday or Thursday. The whole of the *Quran* may be read in less than three days for which purpose there is also a three-fold division of the *Quran* called 'Fil,' the initial letters of each portion forming this word.

WAZU

Arabic. Ablution, also called wuzu and abadast in Persian, has been described by Mohammed as *the half of faith and the key of prayer*. Based on the authority of the *Quran*, ablution is an elaborate system of washing as a ritual preparation for namaaz or prayer and is called Tayammum. The benefits of ablution are highly extolled by Mohammed. Gusal, the washing of the entire body and Miswak, the brushing of teeth are also religious duties.

ZAMZAM

Zamzam is the sacred well within the precinct of the mosque at Mecca. It is supposed to be the identical spring from which Hagar and Ishmael drank in the wilderness.

Zamzam water is held in great esteem and pilgrims to Mecca are advised to break their fast with this water. This water is also bottled and sealed by zamzamis, dispensers of the holy water and exported to other Muslim countries. Religious men break their Ramzan fast with it, applying it to their eyes to brighten their vision and imbibe a few drops at the hour of death.

This term has also become generic for a well situated within the walls of a mosque. Zamzam water may be drunk or used for ablutions but can be put to no baser purpose. Of all the zamzams, the one at Medina is held to be closest in dignity to the one at Mecca, with which it is said to be connected by a subterranean passage. Others believe that it is filled by a vein of water springing directly under the Prophet's grave and this well is situated in what is known as the garden of Fatimah.

ZIMMI

A zimmi is member of the Ahlu'z Zimmah, a non-Muslim subject of a Muslim government, belonging to the Jewish, Christian or Sabeian creed who, for the payment of a poll or capitation tax, enjoys security of his person and property in a Muslim country.

The least objectionable form of infidelity in the eyes of Mohammed is that of the Jews, as possessors of the *Old Testament* and the Christians to whom, moreover the Injil (Gospel) was revealed. This is because according to Muslim tradition they are not guilty of an absolute denial but only of a partial perversion of the truth. Hence only part of the punishment of disbelief is their due. The payment of a tribute, called Jaziya, ensures religious tolerance and protection of their property and lives under Muslim rulers (See Law).

Zimmis are not subjected to the laws of Islam, either religious or temporal. However their construction of places of worship in Muslim territories is unlawful unless they are within their own homes, though they are allowed to maintain and use already existing structures. Saving some slight restrictions, Zimmis are held in all transactions of daily life pretty much on an equal footing with Muslims in Muslim theocracies.

ZIYARAT

Ziyarat is often substituted for Ziyarah which means 'to visit' and is used to signify a visit to the tomb of the Prophet or a martyr or saint of Islam.

Although orthodox Muslim sects like the Wahhabis hold that the Prophet forbade the visitation of graves for the purpose of worship, others point out he himself would visit his mother's grave and is related to have said "...I forbade you to visit graves but you may visit them now." Ziyarat is now a common custom amongst the Muslims. Mohammed's tomb and those of the chief confessors of Islam have become places of great reverence.

Not all Muslim shrines are elaborate structures, some of them being no more than a simple grave surrounded by a low wall to keep it free from defilement and marked by a few flags. Cures of various kinds are believed to be performed at ziyarats and each is provided with a brush or gravel which the pilgrims rub on the afflicted parts of their bodies to affect a cure. The ziyarat is usually looked after by a poor faqir (mendicant) who provides the supplicant with water or a place to rest awhile. Ziyarats are always visited with the feet uncovered and these shrines are always lighted up with small lamps on Thursday evening is the beginning of Friday. Muslims visit shrines to pray for the saints' intercession, though one of the tenets of Islam is that even Mohammed cannot intercede for his people until the Day of Judgement (See Holy Places: Muslim - Ajmer Sharif, Salim Chisti; Hindu and Christian).

JAINISM

ETHICAL DOCTRINES

The ethical doctrines of Jainism, both for the householders and the monks (ascetics) are based on the path of liberation comprising right belief, right knowledge and right conduct.

Along with laying down the path to liberation, Jainism has also prescribed definite rules of conduct to be followed both by the householders and the ascetics. All these rules are directed towards achieving freedom of the soul from Karmic matter, or attaining liberation (See Philosophy: Jain). The rules of conduct have been so designed that all people can follow them easily.

VRATAS

The householders are expected to observe certain rules of conduct or twelve vratas, ie vows, five Anuvratas (small vows) and seven Shilavratas (supplementary vows). These vows form the nucleus of the ethical code and by observing them, laymen can maintain good progress in attaining liberation. The five Anuvratas that should be observed by all are:

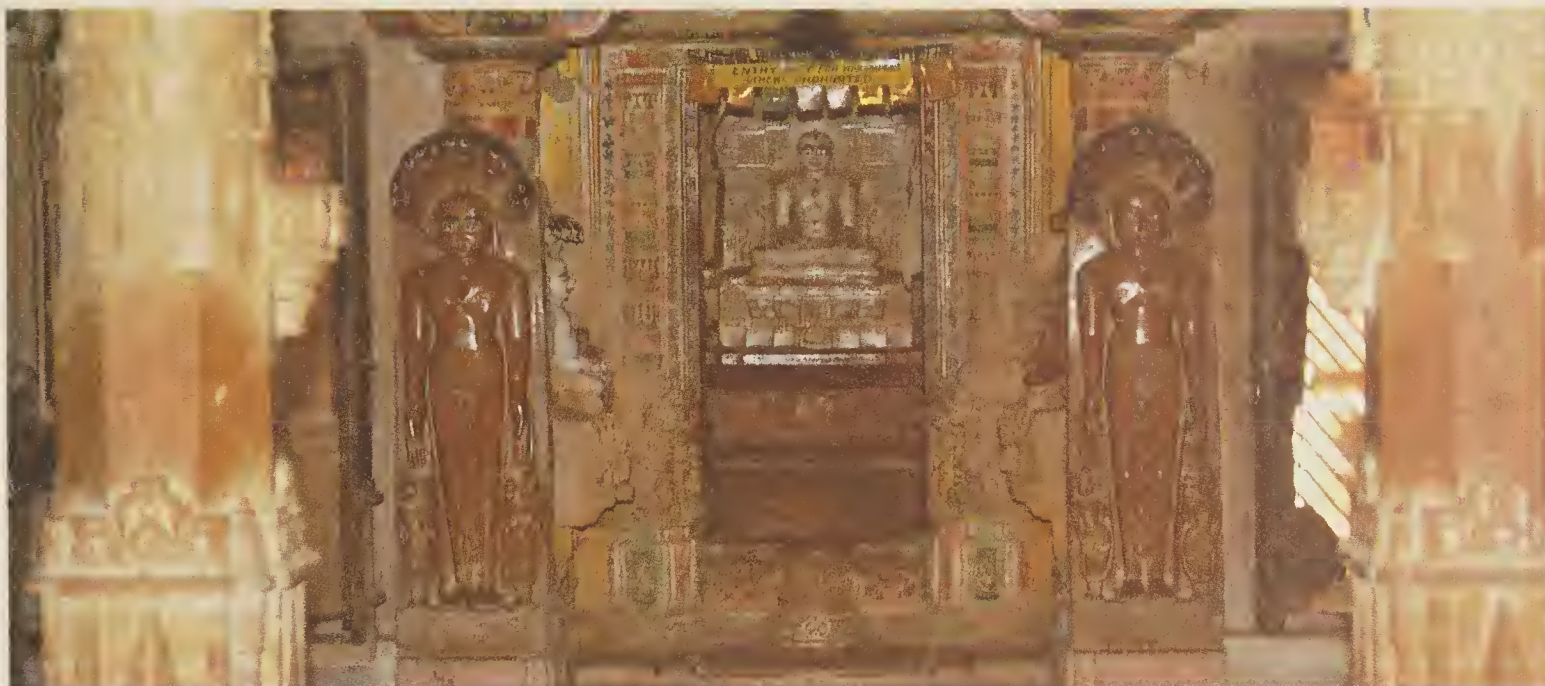
- Ahimsa, abstention from violence or injury to living beings
- Satya, abstention from false speech
- Asteya, abstention from theft
- Brahmacharya, abstention from sexuality
- Aparigraha, abstention from greed for worldly possessions. If these vows are strictly observed they come to be known as Mahavratas or great vows and naturally these are meant for the ascetics. Since laymen cannot observe the vows so strictly, they are allowed to practise them to the extent possible. Therefore, the same vratas, when partially observed are termed as Anuvratas.

TIRTHANKARAS

Jainism was promulgated by 24 preachers known as 'Jinas' (conquerors) or 'Tirthankaras' or ford-makers across the stream of existence.

The 24 Tirthankaras are:

Rishabhanatha or Adinatha
Ajitanatha
Sambhavanatha
Abhinandanathanatha
Sumatinatha
Padmaprabha
Suparshvanatha
Chandraprabha
Pushpadanta or Suvidhinatha
Shitalnatha
Shreyamsanatha



The innermost shrine of a Jain temple

Vasupujya
Vimalanatha
Anantanatha
Dharmanatha
Shantinatha
Kunthunatha
Aranatha
Mallinatha
Munisuvrata
Neminatha
Naminatha
Parsvanatha
Mahavira or Vardhamana

MAHAVIRA

The tradition of Tirthankaras begins with Rishabha, the first Tirthankara and ends with Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara.

Lord Mahavira was born in the 6th century BC in a Lichchavi family, to King Siddhartha and Queen Trishla, in Mallikanatha-Kundalpur in the Vaishali district of Bihar. He was named Vardhamana meaning prosperous or evergrowing.

Sages, Sanjaya (or Sanjayanta) and Vijaya (or Vijayanta), came to see the little prince and were immensely taken up by his unusual looks. They also felt a strange peace come over them on seeing the child. They proclaimed a great future for him and named him Sanmati (intellect). On another occasion while the Prince Vardhamana was playing with his friends in the palace courtyard, he heard loud screams of fear from the streets. He ran out and saw that one of the royal elephants had gone berserk and people were running in fright to avoid being trampled. The boy went up to the elephant and commanded it to quieten down. To the sur-

prise of the assembled crowd the elephant obeyed. Vardhamana mounted the elephant, and rode back to the stable. Impressed by this rare show of courage people thereafter began to address him as 'Vira' (brave one).

On yet another occasion, Vardhamana battled with a large cobra and with ease lifted it and threw it out. His playmates were amazed to see the cobra transformed into a celestial god. The cobra was actually Sangama who had come to test the courage of the young prince. The snake-god acknowledged that Vardhamana was indeed a Mahavira. Thereafter the prince came to be better known Mahavira. Other terms like Ativira, Viranatha and Mahativira were also used to denote him. Because of his connection with Vaishali and Videha, he also acquired names like Vaishalika, Vaishaliya (of Vaishali), Videhadatta (given by Videha) and Videhasukumara (tender prince of Videha).

The comforts of his Nandyavarta palace and all the pleasures of royal life failed to appeal to Mahavira, who felt that these luxuries were all transitory and futile. He concluded that man must work towards something more spiritual and eternal. For this he felt he should exercise great restraint. He refused proposals for marriage as he felt celibacy was the first step towards self control. Mahavira finally renounced worldly life and set out to lead the life of an ascetic.

The auspicious day of his renunciation was the 10th day of Krishna Paksha the dark lunar fortnight (See Cosmos: Calendar) in the month of Margashira. Prince Mahavira, clad in rich clothes, was taken

on a finely bedecked palanquin to the Jnatikhanda garden on the outskirts of Kundalapur, where he got down and facing north sat down on a slab in the shade of an Ashoka tree. There in the presence of a large congregation, he performed 'Keshalocha' a distinct practice of Jain ascetics to pluck out one's hair with one's own hands without shedding so much as a tear. He formally adopted the Pancha Mahavratas, the five great vows of a Jain ascetic and accepted the *Samyaka Charitra* (the mode of conduct prescribed in detail for saints in the ascetic order of the Jinas). The Diksha-vidhi or the initiation ceremony took place in the evening when the moon was in the Uttara Phalguni constellation. Mahavira thus became a Nirgrantha Muni or an ascetic who is outwardly unclothed and inwardly unfettered. This great renunciation is known as Mahavira's Abhinishkramana.

As a Nirgrantha Muni, Mahavira practised several penances and rigours and underwent a 12 year period of torturous self denial. Once on an afternoon on the tenth day of Shukla Paksha (the bright half of the month) in the month of Vaishakh while Mahavira was lost to the world in Shukla dhyana pure meditation (See Mind and Body: Yoga). Kevalajnana (omniscience or all encompassing knowledge) dawned on him. In other words he became a 'Kevali' or the possessor of omniscient knowledge.

With this Mahavira had all his basic doubts on life cleared. He began to preach to large crowds and came to be known as a Tirthankara or a great guide or teacher.

JUDAISM

ABRAHAM

One of the world's oldest organised religions, Judaism dates back to the patriarch Abraham born in Ur of the Chaldees (Babylonia, modern Iraq), around 4,000 years ago. His father was an idol-maker and the local religion was moon worship. Abraham left Babylonia, driven by inner urges. In his old age, he and his wife Sarah had a son, Isaac, as promised by his god.

Abraham conceived of a monotheistic religious system – one invisible god, the brotherhood of man and absolute obedience to the will of this one Creator. The first five books of the *Bible*, called *Torah* (the law or way of life) by the Jews tells, in its first chapter, that it was God's breath that brought life to man, whom he made from dust.

Abraham was tested severely by God when he was asked to take his son up a mountain and sacrifice him. Just as he was about to do so, God sent an angel to intervene, clearly demonstrating that the practice of human sacrifice then in vogue was unacceptable to him.

Thereafter Abraham travelled with his flocks to Egypt and Canaan (modern Palestine) which was the land promised to him through Isaac's descendants. In Canaan, Isaac married Rebekah and they had two sons. The younger, Jacob was renamed Israel after a mysterious vision of god one night. Israel is said to mean 'May God strive, contend or rule.' From then on, these people were called the children of Israel.

Jacob had two wives and 12 sons. The second youngest, Joseph, was his favourite and was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. Joseph was taken to Egypt and through his wisdom he became an important person at the Pharaoh's court. He accurately foretold seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine and was rewarded with the post of overseer of grain distribution. He was reunited with his brothers who came for corn to Egypt.

MOSES

14th-13th century BC. After Joseph's time, the Israelites fell into disfavour with the Pharaohs and were cruelly enslaved. They were delivered by Moses, who had as a baby, escaped the Pharaoh's command to kill all Hebrew (Jewish) male children because his mother had set him afloat in the Nile in a basket of rushes and the childless daughter of the Pharaoh had found him. Moses was reared royally but as an adult he was inspired by God to revolt and demand

the Israelites' freedom. It was only after ten vicious plagues sent by God that Pharaoh relented and the Jews set off again to their promised land, with unleavened bread hurriedly made for the journey (See Festivals: Jewish – Pesah). When Pharaoh's army pursued them, the Red Sea parted miraculously to let the Jews cross and then closed over the army.

The Jews had to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, living in tents. It was in this period that Moses was called to Mount Sinai and given the Ten Commandments by God, divinely inscribed on two slabs. The Jews found Canaan and their 12 tribes (through Jacob's 12 sons) settled there, governed by a series of prophets until the time of the prophet Samuel (c. 1100 BC) when they wanted a king and chose Saul.

DAVID

After Saul, came David, who as a boy, slew the Philistine giant Goliath of Gath and later played the harp for Saul. David made Jerusalem his capital and wrote most of the *Psalms* – a set of 150 hymns to God, of which the best known is the 23rd ('The Lord is my Shepherd...').

David's son Solomon was a king of proverbial wisdom and built the first temple in Jerusalem around 950 BC. After his death, the kingdom split into Israel, of the 10 northern tribes, while the two southern tribes formed the kingdom of Judah (Yehuda, Jew).

Israel was invaded and destroyed by the Assyrians around 721 BC. The ten tribes were scattered mysteriously and have since been called the Lost Tribes of Israel.

In 586 BC, Judah was invaded by Babylonians and most Jews were taken away as slaves. A few remained in Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed but rebuilt in 576 BC when the Persian king, Cyrus (Kyros) conquered Palestine and allowed the Jews to return home and rebuild their temple.

But in the reign of the Persian king Ahashverosh (486-465 BC), his viceroy Haman schemed to kill all the Jews in the Persian empire but was foiled by the Pharaoh's Jewish queen, Esther. This deliverance is annually celebrated as 'Purim' because the date for the massacre was planned with the throw of dice (purim).

The temple in Jerusalem was again destroyed in the 2nd century BC by the invading Syrian king Antiochus IV. A rebel group called the Maccabees (named after their leader, Judas Maccabees, 'Judas the Hammer,') recaptured Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple in 164 BC. They found only one measure of sacred oil for the temple's 'eternal lamp' but it miraculously

lasted eight days.

The Maccabees set up a new Jewish state in 142 BC which lasted until 63 BC – when the Romans under Pompeii conquered Palestine. The Jews revolted in 66 AD and the Romans destroyed the temple in 70 AD. Then came the diaspora – most of the Jews dispersed all over the world, endured persecution, made fortunes, lived in exile but kept their faith – until their return in 1948 and after, to the modern state of Israel, nearly 2,000 years later.

DOCTRINE

There are four aspects to Jewish doctrine.

- The unity of God, the universal creator. Their most important prayer is the *Shema* (Hebrew for 'hear'): 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Blessed be His name whose glorious kingdom is for ever and ever.' The faith helped the scattered Jews to retain their religion through the worst political climates.
- Universal Love. There are 613 precepts for daily life in the *Torah*, a number symbolised in the threads of the male adult Jew's prayer shawl (Tsisith) as a reminder of responsibility. A Rabbi is said to have explained them thus: "Don't do to others what hurts you. This is the whole *Torah*, the rest is commentary."
- The Ten Commandments.
- The Messiah ('Mashiah' in Hebrew). The Jewish idea of a saviour is based in the 51st verse of chapter 22 of the sacred book of the prophet *Samuel* – "A tower of salvation is He to his king; and showest mercy to his anointed" This notion sustained the Jews through centuries of persecution. The prophet Elijah is supposed to come again, to signal the coming of the Messiah, who is a mortal hero, not a supernatural one, born to save the world from war and establish universal brotherhood.

SCRIPTURES

The *Talmud*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs* are some of Jewish scriptures. In addition there are also *13 Articles of the Creed* formulated by Rabbi Maimonides (1135-1204) chanted at the end of religious services.

OBSERVANCES

The Jews firmly believe that prayers and rituals are of no use if they do not promote good conduct. Blessings are recited when it rains, thanks must be given for pleasant events, good food, new clothes and good news. Bread is praised as God-given and so is the Sabbath-light, kindled at the start of Sabbath. Heads are covered in the syna-

gogue as a mark of respect to god.

On the eighth day after birth, a male child is circumcised when named, in obedience to god's command to Abraham. Girls, too, have a religious naming ceremony. At 13, a boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah, a full, responsible adult and must read from the *Sefer Torah* before the congregation. Girls have a confirmation ceremony at 12.

Jews are supposed to die, if conscious, reciting the *Shema*. The body is bathed and wrapped in a white sheet, and *Psalms* and prayers are said. The body is buried with the head towards Jerusalem. Males are buried with their prayer shawls. The coffin, if any, is unsealed so that the earth touches the body, in keeping with the *Torah's* law: "For dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return."

The *Torah* gives dietary laws. Pork is banned, so is fish without fins and scales and scavenging creatures. Blood must be drained away from an animal before it is cooked and eaten. Meat from undiseased animals must be ritually cleaned (Kosher) and they must be slaughtered in a minimally painful way. Milk and meat must not be eaten together – even the dishes used for them must be kept separate.

Indian Jews have a special thanksgiving service at home called Eliya-hoo-hanabi in honour of the prophet Elijah.

Jews must give part of their income to charity. The mother lights the Sabbath candles on Fridays before sunset and they must burn till sunset next day.

PRAYERS

As with all people, Jewish prayers approach god through meditation, pleas, requests, confession, praise and thanksgiving. After their temple was destroyed and the Jews dispersed, temple rituals were replaced by congregational prayers.

SECTS

There are three Jewish sects: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. As the names indicate, they represent radical, moderate and liberal views on adherence to old customs. The biggest reform relates to women. The Conservatives and Reformers give women equal status in the congregation – they can now even become Rabbis. The Sephardis (most oriental Jews fall into this category, are not thus divided into three, unlike the Ashkenazi's (descendants of central European, Russian and western Jews).

INDIAN JEWS

Jews are generally referred to as *Baghdadi*. India is perhaps the only major country in

the world without the taint of anti-Semitism. In fact, for more than 2,000 years, Jews in India have lived with absolute religious freedom. There are less than 7,000 Jews now, as against 30,000 in the early 40s for most have migrated to Israel and the west. Indian Jews are of three kinds – Bene Israel, Cochinis and Baghdadis, all keeping to the Sepharadi form of worship and rituals.

The Baghdadis came to India as traders in 19th century from Iraq and other parts of west Asia, settling in Calcutta, Bombay and Pune. Some, like the wealthy Sassoons contributed generously to projects like the Sassoon Docks (Bombay), hospitals, synagogues, libraries and schools.

Tradition says that Bene-Israel – or 'the children of Israel,' are descended from a group of traders shipwrecked with their families off the coast of Bombay (near the present Naogaon village), about 23 centuries ago. There is Biblical evidence, especially in King Solomon's time, of trade between India and Palestine (Ivory, apes and peacocks were probably procured from India for the pleasure of Solomon's 'Queen of Sheba').

The Bene-Israel, well received by the local people, settled down to the job of oil pressing. Because they did not work on Saturdays, they were affectionately dubbed 'Shaniwar Telis' (Saturday oilmen). They practised their faith with all freedom.

Being cut off from mainstream Judaism, they were considerably Indianized. They speak Marathi, wear Indian clothes and have Maharashtrian surnames, though first names are always Biblical. Their oldest existing synagogue was built in 1797. They served in the Indian armed forces, railways, posts and telegraphs, teaching, nursing, medicine and the bureaucracy. Though some Bene-Israelis emigrated, many stayed back, continuing to enrich their Indian context.

Cochinis – who settled in Cochin on the Malabar coast, first came to India from Palestine and later from Spain about 18 centuries ago. They were originally at Cranganore and other parts of the Malabar and moved to Cochin in the 15th century. Warmly welcomed by the local rulers and people, they integrated with Indians and spoke fluent Malayalam, even while maintaining their Jewish identity. They built the Pardesi synagogue in Cochin's Jew Town in 1568, known for its 800 unique floor tiles from Canton. A prosperous community, they too migrated en masse to Israel, after 1947. From 3000 at the time of Independence, their number is now much less than a 100.

SIKHISM

The Sikh religion originated in the Punjab in the teachings of Guru Nanak (1469-1539). Essentially a monotheistic faith, its followers are found all over India and in many parts of the world. Sikhs are easily recognised by their distinctive appearance. The men wear turbans and grow beards. Their names end in 'Singh' which means a 'lion' as ordained by their last apostle Guru Gobind Singh.



Guru Gobind Singh

The Gurus

NANAK

Nanak, the first Sikh guru, was born in a Hindu family in 1469 AD, at Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib in Pakistan), on the river Ravi, near Lahore. He was married and had two sons, Lakhmidas and Srichand. Nanak, who preferred the company of fakirs or wandering mendicants, travelled all over India with his faithful companion Mardana, singing hymns and preaching. It is said he went even as far as Tibet. He visited Mecca, and his message was, "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim, all are one." He preferred to live with the poor, and is believed to have performed a number of miracles. Guru Nanak shunned idol worship and preached devotion to one God. He wrote the *Japji*, the introductory section of *Adi Granth*, the religious book of the Sikhs.

ANGAD

Guru Angad, the second guru of the Sikhs, was chosen by Guru Nanak to succeed him on his death. Guru Angad was responsible for enlarging the public kitchen and developing it into an institution where all people ate together, regardless of community or religion. He was also the proponent of the Gurmukhi script. Emperor Humayun is said to have received blessings of the guru to recover his kingdom. Guru Angad died in 1552.

AMAR DAS

The third guru of the Sikhs, Amar Das made his residence at Gondwal, near Lahore. He attacked idol worship and polytheism. Emperor Akbar is said to have received the Guru's blessings. He died in 1574.

RAM DAS

Guru Amar Das appointed Jetha, his son-in-law (husband of daughter Bibi Bhani) as the fourth guru, to succeed him on his death. Jetha came to be called Ram Das, and founded Harmandir Sahib, beside a pool, and the city of Amritsar, 'the water of eternity.'

ARJAN

Arjan was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das, and he became the fifth guru in 1581. He completed his father's construction of the Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar, and called it Har Mandir, 'everybody's temple.' He compiled the *Adi Granth*, and gave it the central place in Har Mandir.

He was tortured and put to death in 1606 by the Mughals. He thus became the first Sikh martyr.

HARGOBIND

The son of Guru Arjan, Har Gobind became

the sixth spiritual head of the Sikhs in 1606. He completed the Akal Takht, 'the Throne of the Timeless,' started by his father, on the banks of the pool of Har Mandir Sahib. He died in 1645.

HAR RAI

The grandson of Guru Har Gobind, Har Rai became the seventh Guru of the Sikhs in 1645. The Sikhs supported Dara, the eldest son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, against Aurangzeb, another son of Shah Jahan. Har Rai died in 1661.

HARKISHAN

The son of Guru Har Rai, Har Kishan became the eighth Guru in 1661 but died soon after in 1664.

TEG BAHADUR

Son of Har Gobind, the sixth guru, Teg Bahadur became the ninth guru of the Sikhs in 1664. Enmity between the Sikhs and the Muslims had grown in Delhi. It is believed that Aurangzeb offered to spare Teg Bahadur's life if he converted to Islam. On his refusal, the Mughal emperor ordered his execution. Guru Teg Bahadur was beheaded at Delhi, at the site of the Sis Ganj Gurudwara.

GOBIND SINGH

The son of Guru Teg Bahadur, Gobind Rai became the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. He gave himself the name Singh, or 'lion,' and organised his followers into a new military theocracy called the Khalsa. Since the Guru lost all his four sons in battle against the Mughals, he told his followers that after his death, the *Adi Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs, would become their 'spiritual leader.' He died in 1708.

Scriptures

ADI GRANTH

In Sanskrit, 'grantha' means 'book,' hence the 'Lordly Book.' Material for the *Adi Granth* or *Granth Sahib* was largely collected by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth guru (1581-1606). He recorded the exact words of Guru Nanak, the founder of the faith. Other verses composed by various saints like Beni, Bhikan, Dhanna, Shaikh Farid, a famous Muslim saint who died in 1266, Jayadeva, a Sanskrit poet who lived at the court of King Lakshmanasena (12th century), Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda, Ramananda himself, Ravidas, also a disciple of Ramananda and Surdas were also included (See Sages and Saints). Guru Arjan Dev took up residence in Amritsar, and dictated the texts to a scribe named Bhai Guru Das, who wrote them out in Gurmukhi. The *Adi Granth* was completed in 1604.

MOOL MANTRA

Guru Nanak's hymns, the *Japji Sahib* is the keynote to Sikh beliefs about God and is recited by them in the morning prayers. It commences with the main prayer, which is the declaration of faith.

Ik onkar (God is one)

Satnam (God's name is truth)

Karta purakh (God is the imminent creator)

Nirbhay (without fear)

Nirvair (without enmity)

Akal murat (immortal in form)

Saibham (unborn and self-existent)

Gur Prasad (known by the grace of the Guru – *Adi Granth*)

IK ONKAR

This combination of two characters, a digit and a letter, is one of Sikhism's major symbols. The oneness of God is stressed by the use of the numerical ik (one) wherever 'ik onkar' is written. 'My master is the One. He is the One, brother, and He alone exists' (*Adi Granth*).

DASAM GRANTH

Written in Braj Bhasha, Persian and Punjabi, this was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. The main objective of Guru Gobind's works was to whip up patriotism and martial fervour in people. His verses were meant to stir people to fight the tyranny and fanaticism of Aurangzeb (See History: Dynasties).

GURU PANTH

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs were divided into 12 groups. When collective decisions were to be taken the leaders of these groups would meet and their opinion was considered as the 'Voice of God.' *Gurbani* is the sacred literature of the Sikhs, and it means the Guru's word or a message in a song.

KHALSA

To defend themselves from the Mughals, Guru Gobind Singh initiated a new military theocracy, called the Khalsa. His followers had to wear the five 'kakkas' or k's: the 'kesh,' uncut hair wound into a topknot; the 'kanga,' a hair comb; the 'kara,' a steel bracelet; the 'kachha,' (undergarments) and the 'kirpan,' a two-edged dagger.

SATGURU

The true Guru. Vahiguru is the distinctive Sikh name for God the 'wonderful teacher,' the Guru being the source of authority.

ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrians follow the religion preached by the prophet Zoroaster of ancient Iran. They are, however, more popularly known as Parsis as they come from Pars in south-west Iran. The Parsis are a very small religious community and are found mostly in India and Iran.

After the Arab conquest of the last Iranian empire in 642, most Zoroastrians converted to Islam under pressure. But others fled the country. Of the 1,30,000 Zoroastrians in the world, a little less than 1,00,000 live in India.

ZARATHUSTRA

Propounder of the religion Zoroastrianism, the generally known family name is Spitama or Spithama Zarathustra. In the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Parsis, his name appears as Zarathustra but in later speeches it becomes Zartusht and Zardusht. Zoroaster's father was Pounishaspa and his mother Dughdhova, generally known as Dogdo. It is said that the new-born baby Zarathustra laughed and the country was filled with light. When Zoroaster was 20, he was guided to a divine secluded place on Mount Ushidarena where he stayed for ten years. Through prayer, meditation and communion with spiritual beings, he received divine inspiration and the message of religion through the divine Vahumanah (God mind) and Sarosha (Inspiration).

At 30, Zoroaster returned to his country and preached his religion in the court of Vishtasp. He proclaimed that there was only one God, Ahura Mazda and other gods were manifestations of His divine attributes.

Though it is difficult to date Zoroastrianism, it is almost certain that it flourished during the Achaeminian dynasty of Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes and others because of the references to Ahura Mazda in inscriptions. Darius in his cuneiform inscription says: "Ahura Mazda helped me; by the grace of Ahura Mazda I am king." Similar references are made by the others. Most scholars place the birth of Zarathustra around 10th century BC.

AHURA MAZDA

Ahura Mazda is 'The Wise Lord,' the sole creator and absolute ruler of all creations. Also known as Ohrmazd, he is the creator of spiritual and material worlds and of all creatures and creations within.

AMESHA SPENTAS

A creation of Ahura Mazda, Amesha Spentas are the 'Beneficent Immortals.' The seven Amesha Spentas are chief among the Yazatas or 'Worshipful Beings' or angels. The Amesha Spentas preside over spiritual powers, virtues and qualities.

ANGRA MAINYU

One of the two spirits working in this material world, Angra Mainyu is the spirit of decrease and destruction.

AVESTA

The earliest Zoroastrian scripture, the *Avesta* contains the preachings not only of Zoroaster himself but also of his disciples. The language of the *Avesta* belongs to the east Iranian group of languages and has an affinity with the language of the *Vedas* (See Hindusim). The extant *Avesta* scripture is only a fifth of the *Avesta* literature that was in existence in Sassanian times.

The *Avestas* are divided into five parts: *Avesta Gatha* or divine songs; *Visparad* or invocation of spiritual lords; *Yashtas* dedicated to the divinities; the *Vandidad* or *Videvdat*, the religious law book; the *Khordeh Avesta*, the daily prayer book.

FIRE

Fire is considered a natural symbol, a pure element. It is also a symbol of righteousness that illuminates and purifies human hearts. The Parsis are therefore worshippers of this natural element. When they arrived in India, they built the first Fire temple at Udvarda in Gujarat. The ceremony of feeding the sacred fire at the temple is called 'Gah.' No one except a Parsi is allowed to enter a Fire temple.

FRAVASHI

Avesta Fravashi or faith and inspiration is the angelic guardian spirit of man, a constant companion of the soul in life. But though a constant companion, the Fravashi is not responsible for the actions of man in life. This belief of Fravashi corresponds to the Vedic pitaras and the and the Roman manes, the spirit of the departed ones.

KHORDEH AVESTA

Known as the smaller *Avesta*, it is the prayerbook the Parsis use every day.

KUSTI OR KUSHTI

All Parsis are required to wear the Sadra and Kusti, the 'armour of religion.' Kusti means 'that which encircles the body'. It is a narrow band woven of 72 strands of sheep wool (symbolic of the 72 chapters of the *Yasna*) and is wound thrice round the waist symbolising the three cardinal tenets of the faith: good thoughts, deeds and words. The one who wears the Kusti is considered to be

in the service of Ahura Mazda, the one eternal God. 'Aiwyaozhana' is the *Avesta* word for sacred belt or band. The same word is used for the stormy firmament of the universe.

SPENTA MAINYU

The spirit of growth and prayers, it is one of the two spirits working in this world.

SADRA OR SADRO

Considered to be the garment of the good mind, the Sadra is a loose short-sleeved white shirt with a large V-shaped neck. It is made up of nine pieces of white cotton cloth. Below the neckline is the pocket of good deeds, known as kisse-e-kerfe. A Parsi is required to wear this shirt lifelong. The austere white garment with its simple lines is said to symbolise the purity and simplicity of the worshipper. The word 'astra' meaning clothes is mentioned in the *Avesta* as the spiritual garment of the angels. 'Sadro' is derived from this *Avesta* word.

URVAN

Among the spiritual elements of man, the soul is considered most important as it is the spiritual self. Urvan is the *Avesta* word for soul and can be translated as 'the chosen'.

VIDEVAT

Religious law books that contain laws against impurities and evil forces both visible and invisible. They lay down the penances and purifications to be followed including ceremonial ablutions.

VISPARAT

A supplement of the *Yasna*, it sings the glory of Ahura Mazda.

YASHTS

Epics and heroic events are preserved in the *Yashts*. It is a storehouse of historical events, descriptions of kings and heroes, particularly those of Kayanian lines.

YASNA

The handbook of the worship, retreats, ceremonies and offerings, it includes the 17 cantos of the five Gathas – *Abunavaiti*, *Ushtavaiti*, *Spenta Mainyu*, *Voha Khshathra* and *Vahishtoishiti*.

YAZATAS

General term for the spiritual beings created by Ahura Mazda. They are the associates of Amesha Spentas and preside over the sun, moon, stars, earth, fire and other creations of earth.



SAGES AND SAINTS

Mahapurush

The dazzling Indian pantheon
accords very special status to the wise,
the good and the holy of all
epochs — and India herself is called
Rishi Bhumi, land of sages

AGASTYA

Many hymns in the *Rig Veda* are ascribed to Agastya whose name appears in the *Rig Veda* and the *Puranas*. He married Lopamudra, a princess of Vidarbha. According to a myth, Agastya made the Vindhya ranges stoop to let him cross and settled in the south with his wife. The Vindhya are said to be still crouching, awaiting his return. He turned Nahusha, usurper of the throne of celestials into a serpent when the latter whipped Agastya. By Puranic account, Agastya drank up the waters of the ocean and helped the gods to locate and kill their enemies who were hiding in its depths.

ANANDOMAYEE MA

(30 April 1896-27 August 1982). Born in Tripura into a pious Brahmin family, Nirmala, as she was called, was married at the age of 12. She regularly went into trance-like meditation but her in-law's thought that she had fits. However, her husband understood her spiritual inclination. At his suggestion Nirmala practised severe austerities and meditation. Soon she began giving discourses on spiritual matters and was given the name Anandomayee Ma. She established several ashramas throughout India and won many admirers.

ANASUYA

A scholar known for her pativrata (devotion to husband). The *Ramayana* records her severe penance for ten thousand years in order to bring the water of Ganga closer to her ashrama at Chitrakoot. According to a Puranic story Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were born as her sons at her request. Anasuya's discourse on devotion to one's husband occurs in the *Ramayana*.

ANDAL

(700 AD). A foundling in the region of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, she was discovered under a Tulasi plant by a devout priest, nuchittar, who raised her as his own daughter. As a young girl she developed a great fondness for Krishna. She refused to be married, saying that she had already chosen Lord Ranganatha (an aspect of Vishnu) as her husband.

The distressed father, it is said, was directed by Vishnu himself to arrange Andal's marriage with Sri Ranganatha, the presiding deity at the shrine of Srirangapatnam. The story goes that when she was taken there she disappeared and is said to have merged into her Lord.

Tiruppavai and *Nachtirumoli* are her major compositions in which her love and longing for her Lord are passionately expressed. Some of her verses describe the pranks Krishna played in childhood.

ANGIRAS

An ancient rishi also mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, so called because he was born out of fire. The *Puranas* describe him as a mind-born son of Brahma and one of the 16 Prajapatis or creators. His many wives, sons and daughters are mentioned in various *Puranas* and other texts. Law texts ascribed to him include the *Angiras-dharma-Sastra*, the *Brihad-angiras* and *Angiras-smriti*.

APALA

She is one of the few women seers of the *Rig Veda*. According to later Vedic sources, she was the daughter of the great sage Atri. Suffering from leprosy and forsaken by her husband, she undertook a severe penance to please Indra, king of the celestials. Once, she offered soma (ambrosia) to Indra, who was so pleased with her that he cured her of her affliction.

ARUNDHATI

Wife of sage Vasishtha and daughter of Daksha. Arundhati is seen as a symbol of marital stability. According to a Puranic legend she once observed very severe austerities when rains failed for 12 years. Shiva came to her ashrama in the guise of a Brahmin and Arundhati held discussions with him on several mundane and spiritual matters for 12 years.

Arundhati is also a bright star which rises close to in the constellation of the seven stars called Saptarishi (seven sages, See Religion: Hinduism), known to western astronomers as Ursa Major, the Great Bear.

ATRI

Depicted in the *Rig Veda* as a composer of hymns, there are several myths about him. The *Puranas* describe him as one of the ten mind-born sons of Brahma who created the world. He married Anasuya, the daughter of Daksha. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were born as his sons. The *Atrisambhita* is a dharmashastra text believed to have been written by him.

The *Mahabharata* mentions him as one of the Saptarishis.

BABA SHEIKH FARID

(1175-1265). His family originally hailed from Kabul but he was born at Kantwal now modern Lahore after his grandfather had migrated to Qasur. Young Farid's mother kindled in his heart the love of God and even as a child his mystical bent of mind was apparent. He was deeply influenced by the Sufi, Sheikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi when the latter visited Kantwal. At the age of 18 Farid was sent to a madrasa at Multan where he happened to meet

Khwaja Qutub-ud-din Kaki. Farid implored him to accept him as a disciple and followed him to Delhi. He underwent difficult stages of the mystic Sufi path under Kaki's loving guidance and is said to have performed the difficult penance of hanging himself upside down in a well for 40 nights.

Later he succeeded Khwaja Qutub-ud-din Kaki as the head of the Chisti order. However, he soon left Delhi and after spending some time at Hansi in Hissar, finally settled in Ajodhan now in Pakistan. He had many wives and children but they all lived upon charity that came their way unsolicited. On many an occasion they had to go without food but Baba Farid continued with his path of severe penance and mystic practices.

BASAVESWARA

(1105-1167). Born at Jugaleshwara in the Bijapur district of Karnataka to parents who were great devotees of Shiva. Right from his childhood Basava was fascinated by Jugaleshwara, a form of Shiva. He was a brilliant student and went to live at Kudalasangama, a place famous for its enlightened Shaiva mendicants. A local saint Jata-bhedamuni, taught him Shaiva lore and soon Basava himself became an authority on Shaivism. At his teacher's command he took up an official post but his heart pined for the holy temple at Kudalasangama. He went there for a vacation and was granted a vision of Shiva. As controller of accounts in the government treasury, he married the daughter of the prime minister and used his position to spread Virashaivism in his region. Basava campaigned against the age-old caste system and admitted women to his order. He rose to be the prime minister but his detractors poisoned the king's ears against him and when the king put to death two of Basava's followers, he resigned and became a recluse. He returned to Kudalasangama and lived there till the end. He composed innumerable songs called vachanas on his philosophy (See Literature: Kannada).

BHADRACHALAM RAMADAS

(15th century AD). Born at Nelakondapalli in the Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh, as a child he was called Gopanna and showed a fondness for singing Bhajans. He met Kabir, who asked him to chant Rama's name and came to be known as Ramadas (servant of Rama).

He became the Tehsildar (administrator) of Bhadrachalam, a place sanctified, according to the *Ramayana*, by the visit of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. Ramadas once borrowed money from the king's

exchequer to renovate an old temple. When he was asked to explain where the money had gone, he was unable to reconcile the accounts and was severely punished and imprisoned.

It is said that one night two people came to return to the king the money that was unaccounted for. It was Rama and Lakshmana who had come to the rescue of their bhakta (devotee). Ramadas couldn't understand why he had been punished so despite having spent his entire life in the service of Rama. When he looked back on his life to think of what sin he had committed to be thus punished, he recalled how as a young boy he had caged a parrot. Even though he had loved the bird and lavished every care on it, he knew now what it felt like to be a prisoner behind bars.

BULLE SHAH

(1680-1758). His real name was Abdulla Shah, later shortened to Bullah or Bulle Shah. His father Shah Mohammed Darvesh was well versed in Arabic, Persian and the *Quran* and he laid the foundation of his son's spiritual career. Young Abdullah's desire for communion with God was aroused by his teacher Shah Inayat Lahori, who was a gardener. Abdullah was ridiculed for accepting him as a teacher but remained loyal.

His songs (called Kafis) use the metaphor of love to describe his relationship with his master and God. Charged with emotion, his songs are very popular with the masses in the Punjab region.

Bulle Shah was also very compassionate and forgiving. He saw God in everything and caste and creed distinctions did not exist for him. Like other Sufi saints he was against most rituals and customs practised by the Muslims of his times (See Literature: Punjabi).

CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU

(1485-1533). Nimai or Bishambar who later became Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born to Jagannatha Mishra and his wife Sachi Devi at Nabadweep (Nadia) in Bengal. As a child he was very sharp but also very temperamental. He grew into a sound scholar, teacher and writer. He came into contact with Ishwarapuri, a Vaishnava saint who initiated Nimai into love of Krishna. He renounced the world and came to be called Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He began to sing and dance about the glory of Krishna, and spent 18 years at the Jagannath Temple, Puri. He is also called Gauranga (See Festivals; Literature: Bengali).

DADHICHA

Also called Dadhichi or Dadhyanch. Atharvanya, as he is known in the *Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* was the exponent of the 'mandu vidya,' according to which the original cause of all effects is Brahma. The *Puranas* present him as a donor par excellence who gave away his own bones to the gods to enable them to carve out a weapon.

DAYANANDA SARASWATI

(1824-1883) The founder of the Arya Samaj was born at Morvi in Kathiawar, Gujarat in a traditional Brahmin family. As a lad of 14, he revolted against traditional Hindu practices when he saw a mouse climbing an idol of Shiva in a temple. Immediately he left his home. He chanced to meet Swami Virajananda at Mathura. After studying under him for some years, Dayananda embarked upon his mission of challenging orthodox scholars and some of their practices like idol worship, the caste system, and sati; in 1875 he founded the Arya Samaj. He propagated his message through travel and scholarly commentaries on several Vedic texts and a monumental work called *Satyartha-prakash* (See People: Great Indians). For all his revolutionary ideas, he had to face the wrath of many people. Ultimately he was poisoned.

DURVASA

A sage who was feared for his quick temper and wrath. The *Puranas* describe him as born of Shiva. Kalidasa in his *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* (See Literature: Sanskrit) features Durvasa's curse as a factor in the sequence of events. Valmiki's *Ramayana* features him as a wrathful sage who was about to curse Rama when the latter's guards did not allow the sage to enter the palace. In the *Mahabharata* the five Pandavas and Karna are born because of a boon from Durvasa to their mother Kunti. He reduced his wife Kandati to ashes through a curse.

EKNATH

(1533-1599). The saint poet from Maharashtra was a devotee of Lord and a follower of Namadeva and Dnyaneshwar. His rendering of the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Ramayana* in Marathi are well known for their simplicity and spiritual content.

Eknath was religiously inclined from his childhood and one day he decided to leave home. For a while he stayed with a teacher and practised meditation. At his teacher's command he went back home and was married, but he continued his spiritual and devotional pursuits. It was Eknaths' *Bhavartha Ramayana* which

popularised the cult of Rama in Maharashtra. He has also written *Sankshipta Ramayana* and *Rukmini Swayamvara*.

HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN

(1238-1325). Born Mohammed, in Badayun in Uttar Pradesh, he lost his father when he was only five and was brought up by his mother amidst great hardship. She brought him to Delhi for higher studies but she died soon after.

Mohammed was a wandering monk when he happened to meet Baba Sheikh Farid and became his disciple. He observed strict penances under Sheikh Farid's supervision. He was sent back to Delhi to spread the gospel of Sufism.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya as he came to be known, was most secular in his outlook. An oft repeated anecdote tells of how Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq, who built the new township Tughlaqabad near Delhi died before he could return and attack Nizamuddin Auliya. When the saint heard of Ghiyas-ud-din's plans, he had prophesied '*Hunooz Dilli doorast*' (Delhi is still far away).

His grave in Delhi continues to draw devotees from all walks of life and of all castes and creeds (See Mosques).

JALARAMA BAPA

(1801-1882). Born in a modest family of Gujarat, Jalarama was very generous from his early childhood. Even though he was married and had a daughter he continued to practise charity much to the chagrin of his family and friends. A story goes that once while working in his uncle's grocery shop he gave away everything to a group of sadhus. But when his uncle came to check the stocks, all the shelves were full again. His great spiritual powers were then acknowledged. Later in his life he set up an ashrama and continued to help the poor and needy. He is also said to have miraculous powers to cure people of diseases and handicaps like blindness and paralysis.

JAMADAGNI

His name is mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, other *Samhitas*, and in the *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas*. The *Puranas* depict him as an extremely wrathful sage. He once got ready to dismember the Sun who repentant, fell at his feet and promised to be born as his son.

Legend goes that Kartavirya, the tyrannical king of the Haihayas, took away Kamadhenu, the divine cow, from Jamadagni's ashrama. Parashurama, Jamadagni's son then killed Kartavirya. The deceased king's sons avenged their father's death by killing Jamadagni.

Thereupon his wife climbed his pyre and Parashurama exterminated the Kshatriyas over twenty one generations, ridding the land of evil kings. He is said to have claimed Kerala from the sea by throwing his axe into the ocean (See Religion: Hinduism – Dashavatara).

KABIR

(C. 1440-1580). Tradition has it that Kabir was the abandoned child of a Brahmin widow and was brought up by a Muslim weaver of Varanasi. All the legends agree that Kabir was an unlettered weaver who wrote inspired poetry all his life.

He became a disciple of the great Vaishnava saint Ramananda. His devotion to God became deeper and deeper day by day. His pithy wisdom is expressed through dohas (couplets) that are still taught in schools.

Kabir's greatest contribution is that he brought the most profound philosophy to the masses in a language that they understood. A stalwart of the Bhakti movement, Kabir was against external rituals in both Islam and Hinduism. Many of his verses show his deep understanding of yoga.

It is said that upon Kabir's death a big dispute arose between Hindus and Muslims on whether his remains were to be cremated or buried. His body was miraculously transformed into rose petals which were divided between the two communities.

KAMBAN

(C. 700 AD). Born in the ancient town of Tiruvallundur in the Chola kingdom to a royal priest, Kampan became a great devotee of Rama in his early years.

His fame as a saint poet rests on his Tamil version of the *Ramayana* which varies from Valmiki's narrative (See Literature: Tamil). The language, style and method of presentation adopted by Kampan were recognised by the literary society of the Vaishnava temple town of Srirangam which conferred upon him the title of Kavi Chakravarti (King of Poetry). For centuries Kampan's *Ramayana* has been recited in temples and other places of worship, and is treasured as one of the most inspired accounts of the life of Rama.

KANNAPPA NAYANAR

A famous Nayanmar (Shaiva) saint (See Literature: Tamil), he was also known as Mukunna and Netrarpaka or Kannappa and was originally a hunter.

It is said that he plucked his eye out and placed it on Shiva's image, as a test of his devotion. This ordeal was a ruse by

Shiva who wished to demonstrate Kannappa's devotion to the local priest whom he guided in a dream to where the hunter worshipped a crude mud lingam in the jungle. The horrified priest saw all manner of desecrations taking place before his eyes. To start off with Kannappa unwittingly spat water carried in his mouth for anointing (abhisheka) on the lingam. Since his hands were full of game to be offered as *naivedya* (holy offering) he compounded the sacrilege by offering flowers which he had carried tucked in his hair. At that moment, Shiva spoke out demanding Kannappa's eyes as tribute. Without a moment's hesitation, Kannappa complied, but Shiva pleased with his devotions miraculously restored his vision and Kannappa was recognized as a Shaiva saint.

KANVA

The eighth mandala or part of the *Rig Veda* is supposed to have been composed by Kanva. The Kanva of the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* is known as the foster father of Shakuntala (See Literature: Sanskrit – Kalidasa). Rishi Kanva used to live on the banks of the river Malini. He found Shakuntala abandoned by Menaka, an apsara who succeeded in disturbing Rishi Vishwamitra's penance. The *Ramayana* mentions Kanva among the many Rishis who came to Ayodhya to meet Rama after his exile ended.

KHWAJA MOINUDDIN CHISHTI

(C. 1142-1236). According to Mughal historian Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in 1142 AD. Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya tells of how Moinuddin Chishti came to India and settled in Ajmer during the reign of Rai Pithora the Hindu king who built one of the seven cities of Delhi. It is said that when the king's servants asked the Khwaja to vacate the grounds occupied by him as they were meant for the king's camels, the Khwaja did so but the camels did not move till the Khwaja released them.

Moinuddin's dargah (venerated grave) at Ajmer is a very important centre of pilgrimage in India and neighbouring lands.

Moinuddin Chishti is said to be the founder of the Chishti order of Indian Sufism. He is believed to be very kind and generous and is lovingly called *Garib-nawaz* (protector of the poor).

According to legend, Akbar visited Moinuddin Chishti's dargah on a couple of occasions and got the tombs over the saint's grave constructed.

LAL DED/LALLESHWARI

(1335-1387). Also called Lalla, she was turned out of her home by her cruel mother-in-law and roamed from place to place in search of god. She became one of the greatest saints of Kashmir. Her sayings were published as *Lalla Vakya*. They reveal that she had no faith in rituals and saw no difference between one human being and another. She shared food with all, did not believe in idol worship but herself worshipped Shiva. She greatly influenced several Muslim Sufi saints of Kashmir. Nuruddin was also called Nanda rishi, being the most prominent amongst them. Lal Ded brought about a unique synthesis between Shaivism and Islamic Sufism and thus promoted integration between the Hindus and Muslims of her time.

MADHAVACHARYA

(1199-1278). Born at Shivalli near Udupi in Karnataka to Madhyageha Bhatta and Vedavati, he was named Vasudeva and was believed to be an incarnation of Vayudeva (See Religion: Hinduism – Vedic Gods). After his initial education Madhava decided to become a sanyasi. He left home but after eloquent persuasion by his parents, as he was their only surviving son, he returned. But at the age of 16, when a younger brother was born he took sanyas (renunciation) and was called Purna Prajna. He devoted himself to austerities and when he succeeded his teacher, he came to be called Ananda Tirtha (Fountain of Joy).

Madhavacharya undertook a tour of the country to propagate his doctrine of Dvaita or duality. His 37 works included his commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Brahmasutra* and some *Upanishads* and independent works like the *Mahabharata-Tapasya-Nirnaya* and the *Vishnu-tattva-Nirnaya*.

MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Born near Madurai to a Shaiva couple, Shambhupadashritar and Shivajnanavati, he mastered all the sacred lore and secular arts by the time he was 16. He went on to become the chief minister of the Pandya king but his heart lay in spiritual pursuits. Once sent by the king to purchase horses, he spent all the money on feeding devotees of Shiva who were renovating a temple. For this he was divested of his position and put behind bars. However Shiva is said to have come to his rescue by bringing the horses to the king who then released the deposed minister.

Manikkavachakar (one whose words are like gems) composed two great works – *Tiruvachakam* and *Tirukovaiyar*. It is

said that Shiva, disguised as an old Brahmin, acted as his scribe. Manikkavachakar propounds the path of knowledge where complete unity of the subject, the object and the means is realized. His devotional hymns reflect a mystic quality. He converted a Buddhist king of Sri Lanka to Shavism by restoring his daughter's speech.

MEERA BAI

(1547-1614). Born to a Rajput family, Meera considered herself the bride of Lord Krishna from childhood. Though she was married to a scion of the kings of Mewar, she remained engrossed in Krishna and was persecuted for it. After the death of her husband at an early age, she completely devoted herself to Krishna, singing and dancing in his temples. Her brother-in-law even tried to poison her but Meera was miraculously saved. She composed a number of Bhajans (devotional songs) in praise of Krishna. They are still among the most popular Bhajans today.

NAKKIRAR

A Tamil poet. He was the son of a school teacher in Madurai. He is believed to have authored several poems out of which only two have survived. In *Tirumurugarpada* he praises Muruga (Kartikkeya), the god of war and in *Nedunal Vaadai* he describes the long winter night at Madurai. Nakkirar, however, is best known for his courage of conviction. In a mythical confrontation with Shiva (who was in disguise) he is supposed to have held forth despite the certain death that awaited him as punishment: even if it comes from the Lord with the Third Eye, a fault is a fault.

NAMADEVA

(1270-1350). Born at Pandharpur in Maharashtra, Sant Namadeva was an ardent devotee of Vithoba or Vithal the presiding deity of a famous temple at Pandharpur (See Holy Places: Temples). A tailor by caste, legend says he became a highway robber and once killed 84 men. However he underwent a complete transformation when he saw the child of one of his victims scolded by the widowed mother for begging food. He began practising severe austerities and became known as a saint. Several of his compositions called abhangas (See Performing Arts: Music) have been compiled in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred book of the Sikhs.

NAMMALWAR

(C. 600-800). Born in Alwar-Tirunagari to Kariyar, a local chieftain and his wife Udaya-Nangai. It is said that he did not open his mouth till he was 16, remaining

lost in meditation. At about that time, Madhur Kavi, a Vaishnava saint with some divine inspiration came to him and realized his greatness. At Madhur Kavi's insistence Nammalwar took him as his disciple.

Nammalwar composed devotional hymns in honour of Vishnu especially in his incarnation as Sri Krishna. A tamarind tree by the temple to Vishnu in Tirunagari was his home till he died at the age of 35.

His well known works are *Tiruvoimoli*, *Tiruviruttam* *Tiruvashiriyam*, and *Periya-tiruvantadi*. He is the most important of the 12 Alwar saints of southern Vaishnavism (See Literature: Tamil).

NANDANAR

A medieval saint, associated with the great temple to Shiva Nataraja in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu. An outcaste farm labourer, Nandanar was an ardent Shiva bhakta whose life's ambition was to glimpse the sannidhi (inner shrine) of Chidambaram. His 'yajaman' (feudal lord) refused permission and finally, after much pleading, allowed Nandanar to go only if he managed to harvest a whole field overnight. The undaunted bhakta prayed to Shiva, who helped him complete his virtually impossible task and the yajaman was forced to let him go.

But at the gateway to Chidambaram, the priests refused him entry as Nandanar belonged to a low caste. The saint poured his heart out in song and was miraculously rewarded when the massive stone Nandi (bull) that blocked his view from the gate shifted aside and God revealed Himself, demonstrating not only the equality of all beings, but the superior moral force of a true devotee. Nandanar's songs are still sung in Tamil Nadu.

NARADA

In Puranic literature Narada appears as a divine rishi (devarishi) who has access to everything in the world. He is depicted as a wanderer with a lute in his hands chanting 'Narayana.' Some *Puranas* describe him as a mind-born son of Brahma. Narada is generally spoken of as a meddler, causing disputes between individuals. But popular saying has it that all ends well. He is otherwise depicted as a great scholar and exponent of bhakti and divine wisdom. He played varied roles in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.

Narada is also said to be the author of the *Narada Smriti* which contains important principles of ancient Hindu jurisprudence. A few other Dharma shastra or law texts like *Bribannarada* and *Laghu Narada* are ascribed to him, as well as a text on musicology called the *Narada*

Sambita. He is also mentioned in later Vedic texts like the *Atharva Veda*, the *Aitreya Brahmana* and the *Chandogya Upanishad*.

NARSI MEHTA

A great Krishna bhakta (devotee) from Gujarat, Narsi Mehta composed songs in the Lord's praise. Of these *Vaishnavajana to tene kabiye* was a great favourite with Gandhiji, who made it a part of his daily prayer meetings.

As a child Narsi preferred Raslilas (devotional singing) to school. His personal life was full of tragedies including the loss of his parents when he was very young and in later years, the death of his newly married son.

Narsi 'Bhagat' (bhakta-devotee) preached the equality of all humans and used to hold his bhajan-sessions in areas inhabited by poor and low caste people. For this 'audacity' he incurred the wrath of orthodox Hindus and the matter was reported to the local king. Narsi Mehta's great spiritual attainment was miraculously substantiated when a garland flew from his 'polluted' hands and fell around the neck of Krishna's idol.

There are many anecdotes about how Krishna himself helped Narsi in times of distress and even arranged a dowry for his daughter's wedding.

NURUDDIN/NANDA RISHI

(1377-1439). Born near Srinagar, Sheikh Nuruddin also called Nanda Rishi was deeply influenced by Lalla (See Lal Ded). Even as a child he showed extraordinary spiritual traits. He tried his hand at several vocations but ultimately gave it all up and lived in a cave for 12 years, practising strict penance. He began to draw both Hindu and Muslim devotees. Though he was unlettered, his compositions on spiritual matters are valued in exquisite pieces of Kashmiri poetry. They have been compiled as *Nandnama* and *Nurnama*.

He decried priests and rituals and advised his followers to do their duty and build up a strong character, preaching intense love and devotion to God, through service.

POTANA

(C. 1372 - mid 15th century) Born near Warangal in Andhra Pradesh, he is known for his rendering of the *Bhagavata Purana* in Telugu. Initially Potana, the poet, used to write on mundane matters. But he gradually decided to seek the truth and realise God. It is believed that Rama and Sita once appeared before him and asked him to write the *Bhagavatam* in Telugu.

Potana was a staunch devotee of Saraswati and a legend tells us how the goddess once arranged food for a large number of his followers. A story about his miraculous power to keep a plough moving even when all bullocks had been unyoked is now a part of popular folklore (See Literature: Telugu).

QUTUB-UD-DIN BAKHTIYAR KAKI

(C. 1186-1235). Successor of Khwaja Moynuddin Chishti as the head of the Chishti order. He is called Kaki because he used to distribute kaka or biscuits of gold and silver to the poor who came to him.

His dargah (venerated grave) near the Qutub Minar in Delhi is visited by devotees of all faiths.

Bakhtiyar Kaki met Sheikh Moinddin Chishti at Baghdad, became his disciple and came to Delhi with his master, where Iltutmish was the reigning sovereign. He was invited to the royal palace but he refused, though later, he became the king's principal guide on spiritual matters. Despite having a large family, the Khwaja remained detached and lost in prayers and penances while his family often starved. He lies buried near Mehrauli in Delhi and is now revered as symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity.

RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

(1836-1886). Born on 18 February 1836 to a pious Brahmin couple of Kamapurkar village in Bengal, he was named Gadadhara. He began to have mystical experiences from the age of six. He was not a very keen student and was often found lost in thought. When Gadadhara was 16, his elder brother took him to Calcutta to work as a temple priest. He performed his duties before the deity with great love. He would openly weep and laugh before it, and those around him thought he had gone insane. Then he met Bhairan Brahmani a tantrik (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts) nun who taught him the intricacies of tantra. He is said to have had several direct visions of God. He is also said to have successfully realized the supreme truth as propounded by different cults and religions. He was prone to deep spiritual trances and when he was about 42, he was bestowed the name Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He and his wife Sharada led a saintly life, sublimated in bhakti. Among his most devoted followers was Vivekananda. Paramahansa attained spiritual samadhi or ultimate realisation on 15th August 1886.

RAMANUJA

(1017-1137). Ramanuja (Tamil name, Ilaya Perumal or young lord) was a Vaishnava

and an exponent of the Vishishtadvaita school (qualified monism) of Indian philosophy. He was born at Sriperumbudur near Madras, to Keshava Yajavan and Kantimati. He received his initial instruction from Yadava Prakasha at Kanchi. He differed from his teacher on the interpretation of certain texts and upon learning about the great Vaishnava saint Yamunacharya, he left for Srirangam to meet him. But Yamuna died before Ramanuja could reach Srirangam. He was then initiated into the Vaishnava doctrine by Acharya Mahapurna.

Ramanuja had been married at the age of 16 but could not get along with his wife. He therefore renounced domestic life and settled at Srirangam. He visited many places of pilgrimage and participated in learned debates. When the Chola king of Srirangam began to persecute the Vaishnavas, Ramanuja took refuge in Hoysala. After the death of his persecutor he returned to Srirangam where he spent his remaining years.

Ramanuja's works include the *Sribhashya*, a commentary on the *Brahmasutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

RAMATIRTHA

(1873-1906). Born into an ordinary family in Murariwala in Punjab he was initially called Tirath Ram. A strong-willed youth, he managed a post-graduate degree without any financial support from his family. He started his career as a mathematics teacher of a school in Lahore. Deeply religious, he began to observe severe austerities. His spiritual lectures began to draw large crowds. He was greatly influenced by Swami Madho Tirth, the Shankaracharya of Dwaraka, when the latter visited Lahore in 1897. Tirath Ram met Swami Vivekananda who inspired him to spread the message of the Vedanta.

He moved from Lahore to Uttarakhand and stayed at Gangotri for some time with his family before he sent them away. At Gangotri, he was initiated into monastic life and assumed the name Ramatirtha. He travelled extensively and set up an ashrama in the hills of Tehri. In 1906 he ended his life by taking jala-samadhi (ritual death by drowning).

RAVIDAS

Born to Rahu and Karma, a couple from a socially underprivileged class, Ravi Das had a religious bent of mind from childhood. When he was 16, he left home to visit holy places. In Ayodhya he took a dip in the holy river, Sarayu. A local pandit was furious on learning that Ravidas had entered the holy river but the saint's reply, under-

scoring the essential unity of all human-kind, greatly impressed all who heard him. Later Ravidas became a disciple of Ramananda and is said to have spiritually initiated Meera Bai.

SAMARTH RAMADASA

Born in 1608 but date of death unknown. Known for his spiritual strength, even as a child, he pondered over the mysteries of life. He was interested in religious texts but when his mother made plans to get him married he ran away to Panchavati and lived in a cave for 12 years, practising severe austerities. He travelled to all major pilgrim centres in India and set up about 700 temples and religious organisations. Ramadasa initiated Shivaji as a disciple and grew very close to him. It is said that the leader consulted him on all important matters of state policy. After Shivaji's death in 1685 Swami Ramadasa was deeply hurt by the conduct of his successor and ultimately starved himself to death. He was a prolific writer, and two of his outstanding works are *Dasabodha* and *Manache Shloka*.

SANT DNYANESHWAR

A prominent saint and scholar from Maharashtra, Sant Dnyaneshwar (also called Gnyaneshwar) was born to a sanyasi who returned to worldly life. This was greatly resented by the Brahmin community of the region and his parents were forced to drown themselves. Sant Dnyaneshwar, his two brothers, Nivrutti and Sopana and sister, Muktabai had a traumatic childhood, condemned by people everywhere. The four began to practise hatha-yoga according to the school of Gorakhnatha (See Literature: Hindi). Dnyaneshwar is said to have once made a buffalo recite a few Vedic verses, demonstrating that divine power dwelt in all beings. He is best known for his *Bhavartha dipika* or *Dnyaneshwari*, an erudite commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. His other work *Amritanubhava*, is on tantrik philosophy and practices. He committed ritual suicide by drowning, when he was 31, at Alandi in the river Indrayani, where his samadhi draws a large number of devotees every year.

SHAH ABDUL LATIF

(1689-1752). An eminent Sufi saint of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif was born in Bhai-pur village of Hyderabad (Sindh). He grew into a scholar of Sindhi, Arabic, Persian and Hindi. He studied the *Quran*, Sufism and Vedanta. When he was 14, Abdul Latif was greatly influenced by Sufism. Unable to marry the girl of his choice, he quietly left home and wandered through many places in the company of Hindu sadhus, visiting

several Hindu pilgrimage centres. After some time he returned home to find that he could, after all, marry the girl he wanted. His house became a shelter for all suffering people as well as a centre for religious and spiritual interaction. In his poems Shah Latif has described the miseries of the poor and their longing for union with God. His blunt criticism of orthodox Muslim practices enraged the priests and the local chieftain tried to kill him.

Shah Latif is credited with blending the best of Hindu and Muslim traditions to create a Sufism which was truly Indian in character.

SHANKARACHARYA

Date uncertain. Traditional date of birth is 509 BC, but most modern scholars accept 788 AD as the probable date. Of his life only legendary accounts are available.

He is believed to have been born at Kaladi in Kerala to a Namboodiri couple, Shivaguru and Aryamba. By the time he was eight, he had completed all his education and had renounced the world. He studied further at the feet of his guru Govindapada. Then he set out to establish the supremacy of the Advaita Vedanta doctrine (monism) by defeating exponents of other schools in philosophical debates. He established four centres of Advaita learning at Badrinath, Puri, Dwarka and Sringeri. He wrote learned commentaries on the *Brahmasutras*, the *Gita* and several *Upanishads* showing how each of these propound the Advaita thesis. Shankaracharya also composed several beautiful devotional hymns (See Religion: Hinduism; Philosophy).

SHARADA MA

(1853-1920) was born in Bankura, West Bengal and was married at the age of six to Gadadhara, who later became Ramakrishna Paramahansa. When Sharada came to live with her husband she realized her husband's spiritual inclinations and under his instructions she also began practising severe austerities.

On his death she became a spiritual guide to his followers.

SAI BABA

Nothing much is known of Sai Baba's childhood, where he was born or even whether he had Hindu or Muslim parents. He appeared at Shirdi in Maharashtra for the first time when he was 16. He disappeared to return after four years to remain for 60 years till his mahasamadhi (death) in 1918. Numerous miracles are said to have been wrought by him. 'Hakeem Baba' as he was lovingly called, was venerated in his life-

time and the Sai Baba temples over the country stand testimony to the faith people continue to have in the saint.

SIVANANDA

(1887-1973). Called Kuppuswamy originally, he was born in a well-placed family and qualified as a medical practitioner from Ettayapuram in Kerala. He showed signs of religious piety from his early years. In 1923 Dr. Kuppuswamy renounced worldly life and embarked upon the path of pilgrimage, meditation and spiritual practices. He visited several religious centres and ultimately went to live in the Hardwar-Rishikesh region. In 1938 he founded the Divine Life Society with the aim of spreading the message of Advaita (See Philosophy), universal brotherhood and the unity of all religions.

SUNDARAMURTI NAYANAR

(C. 8th century). Believed to have been an incarnation of Halahal Sundara, an attendant of Shiva. Sundaramurti was born to Brahmin parents and was brought up by a king. It is said that Shiva prevented him from getting married. Later Sundaramurti married two women, both considered to be attendants of Shiva who had come to earth due to Shiva's curse and were destined to be Sundaramurti's wives.

He composed several devotional hymns delineating the immanent and the transcendental aspects of Shiva. His epic work *Tirutondattogai* contains biographies of 63 nayanmars (saints of southern Shaivism).

Several miracles are associated with him. For instance he is said to have obtained large quantities of gold from Shiva on several occasions. Shiva is also said to have arranged food for large groups of Sundara's followers and even settled disputes between his wives. Sundara is credited with bringing back to life a young man killed by a crocodile.

SURDAS

(1479 - date of death unknown). Born in a very poor family of Ballabgarh, Haryana, Surdas was congenitally blind and was therefore forsaken by his family. He left home when he was six and lived for 12 years by a pond near his village. He was believed to have extrasensory powers and his fame as an oracle spread. People started coming to him for solutions to all their problems and disputes.

He used to sing Bhajans (songs) in the Braj dialect of Hindi eulogising Krishna, particularly his pranks as a boy. Bhubhacharya, a great Vaishnava saint of the time was deeply impressed by Surdas'

devotion to Krishna and accepted him as a disciple.

About ten thousand songs composed by Surdas have been compiled in a work called the *Sura Sagara*. It is said that Akbar the Mughal visited the blind bard to hear his Bhajans.

THIRUNAVUKKARASAR/APPAR

(7th century). The second name is really a title, meaning 'king of speech' in tribute to his poetic skill. Born in South Arcot district, Tamil Nadu to Pugalan and Madini, the death of his parents and brother-in-law drove him to seek solace in religion. He joined a Jain monastery under the name Dharmasen, but later reverted to Shaivism, resisting religious persecution from the Pallava king who reverted to Shaivism eventually.

Appar is credited with miracles like reviving a devotee's dead child. He died at 85. He composed many songs of which only 312 survive.

TIRUJNANASAMBANDAR

(Early 7th century). This saint, 'one who has acquired knowledge' was an exponent of southern Shaivism. Born in Shirkali near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu to a devout Shaiva couple, as a child he is said to have been breastfed by Parvati. Legends tell of how he received gifts from Shiva, cured people of mysterious diseases and brought alive the dead. Sambandar, as he is also called, composed several devotional hymns which have been compiled in the first three of the 12 canonical works (*Tirumurai*) of southern Shaivism.

TIRUVALLUVAR

(C. 200 BC). The most venerated Tamil writer of all, he was born in the ancient town of Madurai in a family of weavers. According to a story, a naughty young boy once tore to shreds a beautiful sari woven by Valluvar. The saint's wife hit the offender but Valluvar showed no sign of anger and the boy's heart was immediately transformed.

Valluvar's magnum opus called the *Kural* is seen as an encyclopaedia of life and contains profound thoughts about the three ends of human life – dharma, artha and kama (See Philosophy).

It is said that in the Tamil Sangam, an assembly of great poets, critics and philosophers, his works were greatly admired though initially Valluvar was ridiculed for his humble origin (See Literature: Tamil).

TUKARAM

Born in 1598 in Maharashtra in an underprivileged family, Tukaram's miseries increased as he failed in various vocations

due to his simplicity. He renounced the world and took refuge in the local shrine of Vithoba. His discourses on spiritual matters and his songs based on stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Puranas* drew large crowds. His verses (called abhangs) are rich in spiritual and worldly instruction, some of which are devotional hymns.

Tukaram faced stiff opposition from orthodox quarters for daring to speak of spiritual matters. It is said that once all his works were thrown into the river Indrayani and Tukaram went on a fast unto death in protest. On the 15th day, a great miracle was wrought when all his works floated safely back to the bank.

TULSIDAS

(1532-1624). Born in village Rajpur in Uttar Pradesh to Atma Ram Dube and Tulsi, he lost both his parents in early childhood. Originally called Rambola, he was initiated into religion by Guru Navahari of Ayodhya. Tulsidas had a beautiful wife whom he loved dearly. Once when she had gone to her mother's place, he is said to have crossed a swollen river clinging to a floating corpse in order to meet her. She rebuked him for his obsessive love and this turned him into a recluse.

He was an accomplished poet and looked upon as a pillar of the Bhakti movement in the medieval period. His magnum opus, *Ramcharit Manas*, is the story of Rama retold in Hindi, in poetry so moving that it becomes the chief religious text of Hindi-speaking homes. His other works include *Gitaawali* or various episodes from Rama's life and *Dohawali*, an anthology of verse (See Literature: Hindi).

VALLABHACHARYA

(1479-1587). Founder of the *Shuddha-Advaita* system in the Indian philosophical tradition, Vallabhacharya was born in Andhra Pradesh. He began his study of the sacred works at the age of seven and soon impressed everyone by his learning.

He propagated the philosophy of Vishuddha-Advaita (See Philosophy). His works include *Siddhanta Rahasya* and *Bhakti Vardhini*. He undertook extensive travels throughout the country to spread his message. Towards the end of his life he became a recluse.

VALMIKI

The author of the *Ramayana*. Valmiki is believed to have been a highway robber who became a sage and poet by chanting Rama's name when he was made to realize that he alone would have to face the consequences of his evil deeds. One day, he saw a female Krauncha (heron) grieving over its



Valmiki, sage and poet

mate, killed by a hunter. The pathetic plight of the bird moved him and unconsciously a verse flowed out from his mouth. Pleased with his words, Brahma appeared before him and directed him to write the story of Rama (See Literature: Sanskrit – Adi Shloka). The result was the epic *Ramayana*. Valmiki himself is also an important character in the story of Rama. Sita stayed at his ashrama after she left Ayodhya. Her sons, Lava and Kusha were born and educated at Valmiki's ashrama. The sage's earlier name, was Ratnakara.

VASISHTA

In the *Rig Veda*, Rishis of his family are credited with composing hymns of the seventh mandala. The *Puranas* record stories of three births, first as a mind-born son of Brahma, then from the sacrificial altar of Brahma and the third from the pot as the son of Mitra and Varuna. Vasishta's rivalry with Vishwamitra is the subject of a number of legends. He figures in the *Ramayana* as the royal priest and preacher. The *Mahabharata* tells of Vasishta's efforts to dissuade Drona from joining the great battle. Several *Dharma Shashtra* texts (on law) are said to have been authored by him.

VEDAVYASA

Vyasa's name does not figure in early Vedic literature but he is a very important figure in Puranic Hinduism. The *Puranas* tell us that his father was Rishi Parasara and mother, Satyawati, originally a fishergirl and later, queen mother of the Kurus.

Vyasa is credited with rearranging the four Vedic Samhitas: the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. He also compiled the original Puranic texts and wrote the *Mahabharata*.

He is called Krishna because his mother was named Krishna (dark); and Dwaipayana because he was born on a dvipa

(island). Legendary accounts of his birth say that he grew into a handsome young boy the moment he was born. Immediately thereafter he renounced the world and walked away to perform penance.

Vyasa fathered Shukadeva and Dhritarashtra and Pandu through niyoga or union without marriage (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts – Epics) at the command of his mother Satyawati. He plays an important role throughout the story of the *Mahabharata*.

VISHWAMITRA

Founder of the family of rishis who composed the hymns of the second part of the *Rig Veda*, he appears in the *Ramayana* as the ascetic who asked Rama and Lakshmana to protect his yajna (sacrifice) and taught them to fight. It was he who took Rama to Mithila, to enable him to marry Sita.

His meditation grew so intense that it threatened Indra's primacy as King of Heaven. An apsara, Menaka, was therefore sent to disturb the rishi's penance. Their offspring was Shakuntala (See Literature: Sanskrit). Vishwamitra was a Kshatriya who observed strict austerities to become a Brahmarishi, on par with his rival, Vasishta. He became so powerful that he took Satyavrata (also called Trishanku) alive to the doorstep of heaven and when the latter could not be admitted there, Vishwamitra created a new heaven for his protege and installed him as a star.

Vishwamitra's rivalry with Vasishta is reflected in the legend of Shunahshepa who was to have been sacrificed but Vishwamitra rescued him by teaching him the Varuna-mantra. Vishwamitra subjected Harishchandra, the king of the Solar dynasty and a devotee of truth to extreme hardships to test his truthfulness. He is revered as a great sage and the Kaushika Gotras are named for him (See Religion: Hinduism – Puranas).

YAJNAVALKYA

Priest and law giver, mentioned in texts from the *Satapatha Brahmana* to Smritis. The earliest reference shows him as a great scholar at the court of Janaka (Sita's father). In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* he appears as an exponent of the doctrine of the self and defeats several Brahmins in philosophical debates and is also credited with authoring a famous treatise on Hindu law, the *Yajnavalkya Smriti* (See Law).

The *Mahabharata* says that Yajnavalkya served in the court of Yudhishtira and was the priest at his Rajasuya yajna.



SCIENCE

Vigyana

**The concept of zero
was Indian and some of the world's
earliest explorations of physics, mathematics,
chemistry, astronomy and medicine were
by Indian scientists like Brahmagupta,
Aryabhatta and Sushruta**

This chapter offers a cross-section of traditional Indian terms from the various branches of science.

ABRAKA

The metal element mica, used in alchemy as a transmuting agent while attempting to convert a base metal into gold or silver. An amalgam of silver and copper in the ratio of 16:12 used to 'produce' a transmuting agent was called Chandraka.

ACHARA

The prescription of a course of conduct for a patient. It includes correct behaviour, observance of hygienic rules, and a prescribed medical diet. This term is mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita* and was an important factor in post-operative convalescence.

ADHASVASTIKA

The nadir of the khagola or celestial sphere (See Urdhva Svastika).

ADHYASA

Addition and multiplication. Used in the *Sulbha Sutras* in mathematical formulae for the building of Vedic altars.

AGADATANTRA

The branch of Ayurveda dealing with toxicology and treatment of poisoning. It is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda mentioned in the *Sushruta Samhita*.

AHARA

Proper diet, highly valued by the ancient physicians Sushruta and Charaka (See Food).

AHAN

The smallest unit of time.

AHORATRA

A duration of 24 hours which includes both night and day.

AKSHAKA

Collar bones. Two of the 360 bones in the human body described in the ancient Sanskrit medical treatise *Charaka Samhita*; called 'Amsa' in *Sushruta Samhita*.

AKSHARAPALLI

The letter system. In this system, the letters or syllables of the script in which a manuscript is written are used to denote the numbers. This system is found in the forms as well as arrangement of the numerical symbols used in the pagination of old manuscripts.

AMAVASYA

The darkest night of the lunar fortnight when the moon is not visible, as opposed to Purnamashi/Purnima, the night of the full moon (See Cosmos: Calendar). The system

of reckoning months on the basis of this dark phase of the moon is called 'Utsargina-mayana.' Such a month is called 'Amanta'.

AMSA-PHALAKA

Shoulder blades in *Charaka Samhita*; 'Kaphoda' in *Sushruta Samhita*.

ANGARA

Coal or live coal, a fuel source.

ANGULI

Digit or phalanges.

ANKAPALLI

The decimal notation. The numbers 1 to 9 and their arrangement are Hindu inventions. The earliest epigraphic evidence of this notation is in 594 AD. However, nothing is known as to who invented these numbers and where.

ANTARA

Difference or remainder. What is left after a number is subtracted from another. This definition of the term was given by Aryabhata II (950 AD).

ANTARIKSHA

The firmament, one of the three regions into which the universe is divided from Rig Vedic times. It is further subdivided into three regions. The sun illuminates and sustains them all. Today, this term signifies 'outerspace.'

ANTYA

The last number on the extreme left. For instance, in 2876, the last number is 2. Brahmagupta (598 AD) used this term in his calculation to derive the cube of a number.

APAVARTANA

The reduction of a fraction to its lowest terms by removing the common factors from the numerator and the denominator.

ARATNI

Forearm bones.

ARDHA-MASA

Half month/fortnight. There are 24 half months: Pavitra, Pavayisyan, Puta, Medhya, Yasa, Yasasvan, Ayuh, Amrita, Jiva, Jivisyan, Svarga, Loka, Sahasvan, Sahiyan, Ojasvan, Sahamana, Janayan, Abhijayan, Sudravina, Dravinoda, Ardha-Pavitra, Harikesa, Moda and Pramoda.

ARYABHATTA I

The premier Indian astronomer and algebraist, born in 476 AD at Kusumpura (now Patna). He wrote *Aryabhatiya* dealing with astronomy and mathematics, which is also known as *Arya Siddhanta*. He is known today for his correct, though in his times unorthodox, views on astronomy. For instance, he claimed that earth is a sphere which rotates on

its axis; the moon is essentially dark and is illuminated by the sun. He also obtained the value of Pi as 3.1416 which is correct up to the fourth decimal place. He laid the foundations of algebra. He even knew how to solve algebraic equations involving several variables.

ARYABHATTIYA

Aryabhata's astronomical and mathematical text written in 499 AD by the Indian astronomer and algebraist Aryabhata I, describing contemporary advances in his fields of study.

ASANA

The third stage of the eight practices required to attain godhead, according to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. It consists of proper, steady body postures. Apart from balancing the body functions, it also prepares the mind for subsequent stages to attain godhead. There are a variety of asanas, and some have been medically found to cure certain ailments (See Mind and Body: Yoga).

ASHTA

Eight.

ASRA

Corner or angle in a geometrical figure. In Hindi asra signifies shelter and kona means angle or corner.

ASTHI

The skeletal parts of the human body. According to *Sushruta Samhita*, these are 360 in number and are of five types - Kapala (flat), Urchaka (comb-like), Taruna (cartilaginous), Valaya (curved), and Nalaka (tubular) (See Religion: Hinduism - Samskaras).

ATHARVAN

An ancient priest who was the first to obtain fire. He instituted the worship of Agni. He belonged to the Angiras clan of ancient warrior priests, also known as Atha-vangiras. The *Atharva Veda* is named for him (See Philosophy; Religion: Hinduism - Lesser Deities, Vedas).

ATREYA

A Vedic sage (8th century BC), who was the first systematic teacher of Ayurveda, the Indian medical system. He is also known as 'Atreya Punarvasu.' He composed several treatises, of which the *Atreya Samhita* is well known. He had several disciples who compiled treatises on his teachings which eventually became part of the classic - *Charaka Samhita*.

AVALOKA

Lit. looking down. The power of transmutation at mere sight attributed to mercury. In alchemical or iatro-chemical practices, efforts were made to transmute base metals into gold or silver or transform a mortal into an immortal. The metal element mercury was processed and used as a transmuting agent and its power gradually increased (See Dashavedhin).

AVYAKTA

Lit. unknown. Unknown quantity in algebraic equations.

AVYAKTA GANITA

Algebra. It means the science of calculation by the unknown. The term did not become as popular as Bijaganita did.

BADAVAMUKHA

The earth's South Pole, a term from Hindu cosmology (See Sumeru Parvata).

BADDHA

Amalgamation or alloy, the common alchemical or metallurgical process.

BAHUNALAKA

Hollow bones of arms.

BAUDHAYANA

The author of *Sulabha Sutras*, c. 500-300 BC. This treatise, the biggest and oldest of its kind, deals with methods of constructing geometrical figures, measuring volumes of areas, squaring the circle and other mathematical processes needed for the construction of Vedic altars.

BHAGAHARA

Division. It is one of the 20 mathematical operations given by Brahmagupta (598 AD) in his classical mathematical treatise, *Brahma Sphuta Siddhanta*, which made Hindu mathematics popular in the Arab world later. It was called Sind-Hind in Arabic. The other names of this operation are bhajana, harana and chedana.

BHAJAKA, BHAGAHARA

Divisor. For instance, when A is divided by B, B is the bhajaka.

BHAJYA, HARYA

Dividend. When A is divided by B, A is called the bhajya.

BHANDA-PRATIBHANDA

Barter and exchange, one of Brahmagupta's 20 mathematical operations, 598 AD (See Bhagahara).

BHANDAPUTA

An ancient burner used in chemical experiments, it signified an earthen vessel containing fuel, which was also encircled by fuel such as cowdung cakes. The chemical

under experimentation is kept on top of the vessel.

BHARADWAJA

'Father' of the Indian medical system, Ayurveda, a Vedic sage believed to have presided over a symposium on medicinal plants relating to diseases – perhaps the first such in the world, in the 7th century BC, held in Himalayas. There are, however, several Bharadwajas mentioned in Vedic and Epic literature. Some drug recipes still in use, bear his name and some medical treatises are attributed to him (See Nature: Herbs and Natural Remedies).

BHASKARA II

The first mathematician to declare that any number divided by zero is infinity and the sum of any number and infinity is infinity. Born in 1114 at Bijapur, Karnataka, he considered Brahmagupta his guru in mathematics and extended much of his work. He wrote a treatise on mathematics, *Siddhanta Siromani* of which Leelavati and Bijaganita were two chapters. His contributions to algebra was at par with and sometimes, even ahead of western mathematicians. For instance, he founded differential calculus much before Isaac Newton and G.W. Leibniz. He also wrote a manual of astronomical calculations *Karana Kutubala* which is consulted even today when making calendars.

BHASMA

Oxide of a metal produced after roasting it for a prolonged period. It is usually a powder (See Performing Arts: Dance – Mohiniattam).

BHAJTRA

Bellows used for a furnace, a laboratory or a foundry.

BHAVA MISRA

The last great Ayurvedic physician of India, and a teacher of repute, he lived around 1550 AD in Varanasi and wrote the voluminous treatise *Bhava Prakasa*. He detailed the important constructions of previous medical men along with his own experiences and views. He also described foreign medicinal drugs and the disease, syphilis, brought to India by the Portuguese.

BHINNA

Lit. broken, fraction. *Sulabha Sutras* contain fractions in the statement and solution of problems. The European 'fraction,' 'fraction' are also derived from the Latin 'fractus,' meaning broken.

BHUDHARAYANTRA

A simple closed crucible in which a chemical was processed. The vessel was kept in

sand and heated by burning cowdung cakes.

BHUJA

Base of a right-angled triangle. Also means shoulder.

BHUTAVIDYA

Psychiatry and psychotherapy, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*.

BIJAGANITA

Lit. the counting of seeds, the Sanskrit term for Algebra. Also called Avyakta Ganita. An important mathematical text written by Bhaskara II (b. 1114 AD.), in 1150 AD. It contains 213 verses on algebra, detailing the concepts of negative and positive numbers, negative and positive unknown quantities and their rules of operation, operations on zero, the nature of squares, equations of the first degree, quadratic equations and equations of higher degrees with their solutions, and gives some interesting examples. In this text, Bhaskara II mentions for the first time that any quantity divided by zero becomes infinite (kha-hara). This text was translated into Persian in 1634 under the patronage of the Mughal emperor, Akbar. It forms one of the four parts of the voluminous *Siddhanta Siromani*.

BINDU, SHUNYA BINDU

Dot, a symbol for zero. Initially the numeric symbol for zero. Though later a small circle denoted zero, the term continued to be used in literature.

BRAHMAGUPTA

The mathematician who formalized the status of zero. Born in 598 AD in Bhinmal (now in Pakistan), he wrote two major treatises, *Brahma Sphuta Siddhanta* and *Karana Khanda Khadyaka*, of which the former was held in high esteem and was even translated into Arabic in the 8th century. It contained chapters on arithmetic, algebra, geometry and astronomy.

BRAHMI NUMERALS

The invention of the Brahmins, the ancient Hindu priestly class devoted to the cultivation of sciences, arts, religion and philosophy. These numerals were a part of the Brahmi script, the national script of the ancient Hindus, which was perfected grammatically and phonetically around 1000 BC or earlier.

BRIHASPATI

The planet Jupiter, revered by Hindus as one of the nine planets, Navagraha, that affect human destiny, identified by the Vedic sage Vamadeva (See Cosmos: Astrology).

CHANDRA, CHANDRAMAS, SOMA

The moon. Because it seemed to change size and shape, it was believed to be reborn every fortnight.

CHARAKA

Probably lived before 175 BC and revised the medical encyclopaedia that the physician Agnivesha wrote. His style of revision was liked and as a result the encyclopaedia became known as the *Charaka Samhita*.

CHARAKA SAMHITA

An encyclopaedia on medicine, written by the sage Agnivesha under the guidance of his teacher-physician Atreya in the 8th century BC. However, it was only when Charaka revised this medical encyclopaedia that it became popular and gained popularity as the *Charaka Samhita*. It remained a standard work on medicine for more than two millennia and was translated into Arabic and Latin in medieval times. It describes anatomy, physiology, embryology, diagnosis and prognosis, and even selection and initiation of medical students and the medical oath.

CHATURASAMA

Square.

CHURNA

Powdered form of a substance obtained by grinding it when it is dry and filtering it through a piece of cloth.

DAKSHINAYANA

Winter solstice or the point from which the sun takes its southwardly course in the sky. It starts with the beginning of Cancer and ends with the beginning of Capricorn. It is a phase believed to be associated with Pitris or ancestors, particularly the seasons of Sharad (autumn), Hemanta (early winter) and Sisira (late winter. See Uttarayana; Cosmos: Calendar).

DAKSHINOVRIITI YANTRA

Transit circle or meridian circle, one of the instruments of Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743), the Rajput king of Jaipur. It is meant to determine the altitudes of heavenly bodies when they pass the meridian.

DANTA

Teeth. Also ivory (See Handicraft). Ganesha, the single-tusked, elephant-headed deity is called Ekadanta.

DANTA SHANKU

Sushruta's pincers for extracting teeth.

DANTA-ULUKHALA

Sockets of teeth.

DASHA

Ten. This concept of enumeration in terms of the power of ten was an ancient Indian invention. The Arabs called Indian numbers Hindsa and popularised a modified form in Europe in the 15th century where they were known as Arabic numerals. However, it was the ancient Indian mathematician Medhatithi who first taught the world to name numbers in terms of ten.

DASHAVEDHIN

An alchemical term to describe mercury when it can transmute ten times the weight of the base metal into gold or silver (See Avaloka, Dhumavedhin). Mercury was also called lakshavedhin and kotivedhin.

DEVANAKSHATRA

The first 14 nakshatras from Kritika to Vishakha (See Nakshatra, Yamanakshatra; Cosmos: Astrology).

DHALANA

The pouring of liquid.

DHAMANI

The channel in the human body. There are supposed to be several channels of this kind which transport the three humours (vayu, pitta and kapha) and prana (life breath). According to *Sushruta Samhita*, these are divided into two groups depending upon where they originate and what they transport. It is, however, difficult to say in modern terms whether they are veins, ducts or arteries, though some authorities favour arteries.

DHANVANTARI

The legendary physician who is believed to be the propounder of Ayurveda, 'the science of life,' who taught Sushruta (6th century BC) surgery. Although his name does not appear in the *Vedas*, several myths and legends are associated with him. He is considered the deity of classical Indian medicine. Any Ayurvedic doctor who achieves excellence in Ayurveda is given the title of Dhanvantari. Today, there is an Ayurvedic award named for him and the festival, Dhanteras, is celebrated in his honour (See Festivals).

DHATU

Bones, tissues and fluids. which are produced according to bodily requirements.

DHATURUPIRASA

A fluid with the qualities of metal, such as mercury.

DHULI KARMA

Lit. dust work. This term referred to the task of mathematical calculations which were performed on dust spread on a board or on

the ground. When Hindu mathematical texts were translated into Arabic in medieval times, this term was translated as Hisab-al-ghobar.

DHUMAVEDHIN

Another name for mercury when used in alchemy and refers to the metal's transmuting powers in terms of the smoke it emits when heated over the flame (See Dashedhin).

DHYANA

The seventh stage of the eight practices required to attain godhead, according to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. It consists of contemplating an object or repeating a word or mantra. Apart from bringing in a physiological balance in the body, it also prepares the mind for the last and final stage of Yoga, ie Samadhi. Today, several meditational practices are popular especially Transcendental Meditation. These have been found to be medically beneficial to the body, for instance, in the control of blood pressure or in curing headaches (See Mind and Body; Philosophy).

DIRGHA

Rectangle or a four-sided geometrical figure with opposite sides equal.

DIRGHATAMAS

A Vedic sage and astronomer, the first to realise the importance of having a yardstick for measuring time. He conceptualised Yuga (See Cosmos: Calendar; Religion: Hinduism—Puranic Time).

DIVYAUSHADHI

One of the two broad divisions of the vegetable kingdom. Lit. heavenly medicinal plants. Belonging to 64 families, these medicinal plants are mainly employed in various alchemical and iatro-chemical processes involving the metal mercury, for instance, the restoration of lost essences and imparting desired properties of metals to mercury.

DOSHA

Deranged humour, a result of the imbalance created in the body amongst the three humours (vayu, pitta and kapha).

DRAVANA

The process of liquefaction, melting or dissolution. The result is 'drava.'

DRIDHABALA

A Kashmiri Ayurvedic physician, c. 9th century AD, renowned for updating and editing the medical encyclopaedia, *Charaka Samhita* in the form now available.

DRONA-KALASHA

Trough or wooden tub used in ancient laboratories for experiments with chemicals, to prepare medicinal compounds.

DVYANUKA

Molecule, whose components are paramanus.

DYAUS

The heaven. One of the three Rig Vedic regions of the universe (See Antariksh).

EKA

One (See Dasha).

ESANT

Probe or director employed to search the course or direction of pus, one of the cutting instruments mentioned in *Sushruta Sambhita*.

GAJAPUTA

A crucible kept half-way in a heap of cowdung cakes arranged in a square pit and heated from below for chemical experiments (See Rasayana, Puta, Kharparaputa, Bhandaputa).

GALANA

Chemically the process of filtration, in common parlance, the process of melting.

GANANA/GANITA

Today, ginana/ganit, arithmetic, a subject with a long history in India, from the days of the Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3200 BC) when there were accurate weights and measures, drains and trade. Vedic literature (c. 2000 BC) called this science 'Rasavidya.' Later religions from the 6th century BC, like Jainism and Buddhism knew it as 'samkhyana' and 'ganana.' Traditionally valued as the pursuit of a noble mind. At one time it included astronomy.

GANDAKUTA LALATA

The part comprising nose-cheek-brow.

GANDHA

Fumes emitted by a substance.

GARGA

According to the *Vedas*, he was the first person to have enumerated all the nakshatras or stars in the night sky. Nothing much is known about him except that he was an astrologer and his teachings became a part of the treatise *Garga Sambhita* which was composed at the beginning of the Christian era.

GHANA

Cube, also solid cube. One of 20 mathematical operations in Brahmagupta's treatise. Another term for cube rarely used is 'Brinda'.

GHANAMULA

Cuberoot. One of the eight operations considered fundamental by ancient mathematicians.

GHATIKA

Two-fifths of an hour, a measure of time employed in various astronomical observations.

GHATI

Clepsydra, an ancient water-clock, made of copper, shaped like the lower half of a water pot, with a hole in its base. The vessel is kept on the water surface. The size of the hole is adjusted in such a manner that the vessel sinks 24 or 60 times in a day.

GRIVA

Neck bones in the *Charaka Sambhita*. 'Skandha' in the *Sushruta Sambhita*.

GULPHA

Ankle bones.

GUNA

Multiple. Gunaka or gunakara is a multiplier while multiplication itself is gunana.

HEMABRAKA

An amalgam of gold and mica used in alchemy.

HEMARORAKA

Molten gold, one of the prime objectives of medieval alchemy.

HANVASTHI

Lower jaw bone, the mandible.

INDRIYA

The 11 senses: the mind, the five senses organs, and the five organs of motion and action.

ISHTA

Given or optional. In algebra this term is frequently used to indicate the given conditions or available options in various calculations or rules.

ISTIKA

Brick used to build Vedic fire altars.

JAI PRAKASH

One of the original and well-known instruments of Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743), the Rajput king of Jaipur (See History: Dynasties). It consists of two hemispheric bowls set in stone and masonry. On their concave sides are mapped out coordinates, complementary to each other. During the day, the shadow of two intersecting crosswires (stretched from north to south and from east to west) indicate the position of the sun on the concave surfaces of the hemispheric bowls. The position of other heavenly bodies during the night can be determined

by tying strings to the crosswires and so projecting the heavenly bodies on to the concave bowls visually. This particular instrument is in the Jantar Mantars (observatories) in Delhi and Jaipur (See Ram Yantra, Samrat Yantra, Shasthamsa Yantra).

JALAYUKA

Leeches employed for sucking blood. The term literally means waterdweller. According to the *Sushruta Sambhita*, venomous leeches were not used for blood letting operations.

JANGHASTHI

Leg bones; simply 'Jangha' in the *Sushruta Sambhita*.

JANU

Knee cap bones; called 'Asthivat' in the *Sushruta Sambhita*.

JANU-KAPALIKA

Elbow pans.

JARNANA

The process of calcination or heating for a prolonged period. In common parlance 'jalaana', to burn.

JASADA

The metal element zinc.

JIVAKA

A famous physician in the 6th and 5th century BC, a close associate of the Buddha. Born near Patna, the then capital of the Magadhan empire, he travelled extensively in north India, treating rich and poor patients alike.

JYOTISH

The science of astronomy. Today, it refers to the science of astrology. In ancient times, astronomy included the knowledge of the universe and the seasons (See Cosmos: Astrology).

KALA

The connective and supportive tissues of the human body. There are seven sets of these tissues, according to the *Sushruta Sambhita*. The term also means the arts or an art.

KALA CHAKRA

The time wheel which was believed to consist of 5, 6, 7...12 spokes; each spoke representing a unit of time such as a ritu or season and sometimes a masa or month (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts).

KALAKRIYA

Reckoning of time. Solar year, lunar month, sidereal day and intercalary month are some of the divisions by which time is reckoned. The *Aryabhatiya* has an entire section on Kalakriya.

KALASA/KALASHA

Vat or beaker for chemical and medicinal experiments. The Kalasa is also an important requisite for any auspicious religious rite or ritual. Seven mango leaves are placed around the narrow mouth of a kalasa which is topped by a coconut and kept at the site of worship (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts).

KALPA

The substance capable of performing anything by virtue of its own potency, such as transmuting a base metal into gold or silver, bestowing psychic powers on humans or prolonging life (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts).

KANADA

An austere 6th century Vedic sage from Prabhasa near Allahabad, who composed the *Sutras* of the Vaisheshika system in which he propounded the atomic theory of matter (See Philosophy).

KANDHARA

The sinews in the human body, of which there are 16 according to Sushruta – two in each arm, two in each leg, four in the neck and four in the back.

KAPHA, SHLESMA

Phlegm, one of the three humours essential for the existence of the living body. It is a manifestation of the cosmic principle Apas, endowing placid and cooling characteristics to the body. In modern physiology, these are the functions of the lymphatic system of body.

KAPILA

A descendant of the sage Manu the law-giver, he was born at Pushkara, near Ajmer, Rajasthan, and lived at Ganganagar in the 7th or 8th century BC. He propounded the Samkhya theory of the evolution of the universe. According to this theory, the universe evolved out of an unmanifested, undifferentiated, infinite and eternal primordial ground called Prakriti. The theory is in the form of aphorisms called *Samkhya Sutras* (See Philosophy).

KAULALA CHAKRA

The potter's wheel, revered as one of the oldest instruments of creation. The potter himself, when he spun the wheel, was invested with the sacred name of Prajapati, lord of creation (See Handicraft: Pottery; Religion: Hinduism).

KAUMARABHRTYA

Paediatrics, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda mentioned by Sushruta.



Kaulala Chakra, the potter's wheel

KAYA CHIKITSA

General medicine such as the treatment of fevers included in Ayurveda.

KAYAKALPA

A tantrik attempt, involving yoga and sundry elixirs, to prolong human life.

KETU

A fictitious planet postulated by the ancient Hindus to explain eclipses, mentioned in *Mahabharata*. From the time of Varahamihira, it signified the descending node of the moon to astronomers. In Vedic times, it also denoted any unusual phenomenon such as a comet, meteor or falling star (See Rahu; Cosmos: Astrology).

KHA

Another name for shunya, zero.

KHAGOLA

The celestial sphere, in which all the stars and planets in the universe are projected. The observer or earth lies at the centre of this sphere. This imaginary sphere is employed to represent and determine the positions and motions of planets, stars and other heavenly bodies.

KHAHARA

Infinite. Any quantity divided by zero becomes infinite. Any quantity added to or subtracted from this quantity does not affect it in any manner. It remains the same. Today it is denoted by the symbol ∞ . It was Bhaskara II who first mentioned this quantity in his text *Bijaganita* (1115 AD) while describing operations by zero.

KHALVA

The mortar for grinding substances into powders, commonly used in any chemical laboratory.

KHAROSHTI NUMERALS

Lit. asslip, a foreign script brought to India from Persia when Darius (c. 500 BC) conquered the Punjab. Most inscriptions in it are found in the ancient province of Gandhara (eastern Afghanistan and northern Punjab). It is written from right to left. In India it was popular from 400 BC to 300 AD. Kharosthi numerals were modified and absorbed in the more extensively used Brahmi numerals (See Brahmi numerals; Literature: Writing).

KRAMANA

Mercury's power to penetrate another metal.

KONA

Angle. In astrology the planet Shani (Saturn) rules the corner or angle of the janampatri (nativity chart) and is called konasthana, whose place is the corner (See Asra;

Cosmos: Astrology).

KRIYA

Organic functions of the human body, like sleep or the flow of body fluid. In Yoga, it means methods of cleansing the body (See Mind and Body: Yoga; Religion: Hinduism – Samskaras).

KSHETRA

Area of a geometrical figure or simply figure. Also place of pilgrimage.

KSHETRAGATA

Geometrical proof. According to Bhaskara II (1150 AD) this is one of two kinds of proof available to substantiate any algebraic statement or rule.

KSHITJA, HARIJA

Horizon or celestial horizon, it passes through the four cardinal points, north, east, south and west of the khagola or celestial sphere at whose centre is the observer or earth. 'Kshitija' is the term commonly used in various astronomical treatises, however Varahamihira used 'Harija' instead in his treatise.

LABDHI, LABDHA

Quotient. When A is divided by B, the A/B obtained is the Labdhi.

LAGADHA

Ancient Kashmiri astronomer and mathematician, born around 900 BC, was the first to systematise astronomy and write a treatise on it called *Vedanga Jyotisha*.

LAGNA

The rising of a nakshatra or zodiac sign. Lagna is a term used in casting horoscopes (See Cosmos: Astrology).

LEELAVATI

An important mathematical text written by Bhaskara II (b. 1114 AD), named for Bhaskara's daughter with 278 verses on arithmetic and forms one of the four parts of the voluminous text *Siddhanta Siromani*. It contains units, operations of numbers and fractions as well as zero, combinations and permutations, among other mathematical premises. The Mughal emperor Akbar had it translated into Persian in 1587. It is also known as *Patiganita*.

LEKHA/REKHA

Line. A 'lekha riju' is a straight line.

LEPA, LEPANA

The smearing of one substance (oil or paste) over another.

MADHAVAKAR

Ayurvedic physician, master diagnostician, author of the treatise *Rigvinischaya Madhavanidana Nidana*. Born in Gol-

konda, southern India, c. 9th/10th century AD. He also wrote on Hindu philosophy, religion and astronomy.

MADHYA

Centre of a circle or any geometrical figure or line.

MADHYAGNI

Warm or moderate heat.

MAHAVIRA

Eminent mathematician born c. 850 AD. He wrote a small mathematical treatise, *Ganita Sara Samgraha*. He belonged to what is now known as Karnataka and adopted the Jaina faith. As per its tradition, he studied mathematics for its own sake and did not associate it with astronomy as was the practice then.

MANABHANDA

Measuring vessel, commonly used to measure volumes of liquids needed in scientific experiments.

MANDALA

Circle (See Archaeology/Architecture; Philosophy; Visual Arts: Design).

MANIKA

Wrist bones. 'Kalai' in Hindi.

MARMA

The vital parts in the human body. Sushruta says there are 107 such: 44 in the four extremities, 12 in the chest, 14 in the back and 37 in the neck and above.

MASA

Month, the interval between consecutive new moons or full moons. This has been accepted as a natural unit of time from the ancient times. It is of 30 days and is divided into two natural halves: the light or waxing half called Shukla and the dark or waning half Krishna (See Cosmos: Calendar).

There are 13 months, with one Adhik-masa or extra month: Aruna, Arunaraja, Pundarika, Visvajit, Abhijit, Arudra, Pin-vamana, Unnavan, Rasavan, Iravan, Sarvosadha, Sambhara and Mahasvan. Names of these months are associated with seasons and not with constellations or nakshatras. Later, when it was found that the phases of moon, the basis of months, ended in the midst of nakshatras, various full-moons were named after them, and subsequently months were called Chaitra, Vaisakh and so on (See Cosmos: Calendar).

MAYUKHA

The peg or pin meant for weaving textiles in ancient times.

MEDHATITHI

A Vedic sage who conceptualised the powers of ten in enumeration. He could state very high numerals systematically. His name is associated with hundreds of verses in the *Rig Veda*, *Atharva Veda* and *Yajur Veda* (See Dasha).

MUKAMUSA

A crucible with a closed mouth, used to roast substances.

MULA, PADA

Root or basis of a number. Mula is the oldest of the two terms being in use from about 100 BC because it occurs in *Anuyogadvaya Sutra*. Pada came into circulation from the 7th century. The Arabs translated mula into jadhr, the basis of square. The Latin term 'radix' is also a translation of mula.

MUSA, MUSIKA

Crucible, commonly used in experiments for heating chemicals to a very high temperature for a length of time.

NADI

In the Charaka Samhita, one of the types of channels in the human body. It literally means tube. In Ayurvedic medicine, several diseases or conditions in the human body are correctly diagnosed by studying the pulse rate of these nadis.

NAGARJUNA

A monk who indulged in alchemy, alleged to have practised the so-called black arts of tantra (See Philosophy). Born at Fort Daihak near Somnath, Gujarat, in 931 AD. His treatise *Rasa Ratnakara*, written in the form of dialogues between him and the gods, dealt with the preparations of mercury compounds to transmute base metal to gold. He also wrote a supplement to the *Sushruta Samhita* on the preparation of medicinal drugs called *Uttaratantra*.

NAKHA

Nails.

NAKSHATRA

A constellation or group of stars. According to Indian astronomical system, there are 27 nakshatras (See Cosmos: Astrology). Almost all the names of nakshatras are based on ancient legends and are integral to the sacrificial systems of the ancient Hindus. They are called 'lunar asterisms or mansions' because each denotes the moon's position in the sky as it goes around the earth every month.

NAKSHATRA PATHAKA

A reader of stars, meaning both astronomer and astrologer. In ancient and medieval times, the two subjects were not separate.

NARENDRA

Lit. lord of men. An alchemist, so-called because of his alleged ability to concoct the elixir of life.

NASHTAPISTA

When a chemical loses its own character and becomes a pasty mess.

NIRHARA

Subtraction (See Adhyasa, Bhagahara).

NIRUDDHA

The lowest common multiple or L.C.M., known to ancient Indian mathematicians. Mahavira (850 AD) was the first to shorten the process of deriving niruddha.

NIRVAHANA

Amalgamation of two metals of equal weight.

PADARTHA

All nameable things or predictables. These are divided into two classes, namely, existence and non-existence. These are further subdivided into several categories. Kanada employed this term in the *Vaisheshika Sutras* (See Philosophy).

PANCHABHUTAS, MAHABHUTANI

The doctrine of five elements: prithvi, apas, tejas, vayu and akasa (earth, water, fire, air and the all-pervading medium, ether), each with considerable significance (See Religion: Hinduism – Concepts). The doctrine was formulated in the *Upanishads* to account for the apparently unordered, diverse world of matter and qualities. It has no independent status but is an integrated component of the leading systems of Indian thought, namely, Samkhya, Vaiseshika and Nyaya (See Philosophy).

PANCHAKARNA/PANCHAKONA

Pentagon or a five-sided geometrical figure.

PANCHANGA

Astronomical almanac. It contains tabulated information on the positions of various heavenly bodies like the moon, the planets and stars, which is of use to astrologers, astronomers and those who time their religious rites and sacrifices on an astronomical basis (See Cosmos: Calendar).

PANCHASIDDHANTIKA

Lit. the five siddhantas or principles. Written by the famous Indian scientist and astronomer Varahamihira (499-587 AD), it contains the five systems of astronomy, namely, Paitamaha, Vasishta, Romaka, Paulisa and *Surya Siddhanta*, a review of then existing knowledge. However, of the five systems, the full text of only one – *Surya Siddhanta* – is now available. However, it too has been modified by different

astronomers over the centuries. It differs from others not fundamentally but in astronomical constants and methods.

PANCHAVASTHA

The five stages in heating a metal for a prolonged period: smoky, sticky, leaping, tremor-filled, and devoid of tremor.

PANDULEKHA/SHVETAVARNI

A piece of chalk or soapstone used to write on a board.

PARA PAKSHA

The dark half of the month ending with the full moon, also called krishna paksha. All 15 nights and days of this period have distinct names: Prastutam, Shukram, Arunam, Vistutam, Amritam, Bhanumat, Samstutam, Tejasvi, Marichimat, Kalyanam, Teja, Abhitapat, Visvarupam, Samriddham and Tapasvat. The names of the nights are as follows: Suta, Prasuta, Kanta, Sunvati, Prapa, Kamyā, Sampa, Kamajata, Suyanama, Triptih, Ayusmati, Abhisuyamana, Tarpayanti and Kamadugha (See Purva Paksha).

PARACHI

The principal line of symmetry of a Vedic altar. It is always along the east-west direction. The *Sulabha Sutras* always described the construction of altars in terms of this line, also called the eastward line.

PARAMANU

Atom, a concept propounded by Kanada. It is the ultimate, indestructible particle of each of the four substances, namely, earth, water, fire and air. It is by necessity beyond the senses and its existence can only be proved through inference (See Dvyanuka).

PARARDHA

One billion.

PARICHARA

Assistant to a physician or surgeon. In his *Sushruta Samhita*, the ancient surgeon Sushruta stresses the importance of assistants in treatment and surgery, the qualities they should and should not have. He also prefers that an assistant should be of the same sex as the patient.

PARIDHI/PARINAH

Circumference of a circle.

PARIMANA

Dimension which is the cause of all measurements. It is of four kinds – small, large, long and short.

PARIMANAJNA

An expert mathematician who dealt exclusively with measurements.

PARIMANDALA

Circle.

PARSHNI

Heels.

PARSHUKA-STHALAKA

Sockets of ribs.

PARSVA-PARSUKA

Ribs.

PATALAYANTRA

An apparatus consisting of two vessels kept one above the other. The upper vessel has a hole at its base and the chemicals under experimentation are kept in it. The entire apparatus is lowered into a pit and filled with soil. A fire is then lit on the ground over the apparatus. It was employed in various alchemical and iatro-chemical practices popular in medieval times.

PATANJALI

The expounder of the *Yoga Sutras*, a set of practices divided into eight stages, aimed at the control of both mind and body to achieve godhead. Probably lived in the 2nd century BC but is considered a mythological figure, an incarnation of the serpent king, Sesha, who supports and surrounds the universe. He has a namesake who composed the *Mababbashya*, a commentary on Panini's Sanskrit grammar (See Literature; Sanskrit; Mind and Body: Yoga).

PESHT

The muscles of the human body, 500 by Sushruta's reckoning.

PITTA

Bile, one of the three essential humours in the living body, a manifestation of the fiery principle tejas. It is of five kinds, according to location and function, all of which contribute to the preservation of the body through metabolism.

PRADHI

Chord, segment of a circle.

PRAKRITI

The ultimate ground which is unmanifested and self-existent. This ground is conceived as formless and undifferentiated, limitless, ubiquitous, indestructible and undecaying, without beginning and without end, inert and unattached. It has three characteristics or gunas namely, sattva (essence), rajas (energy) and tamas (inertia). The present world is a manifestation of the ultimate ground due to the initiative of Purusha (which disturbs the equilibrium among the three gunas existing in it). This term has different shades of meaning in different contexts (See Philosophy).

PRANAYAMA

The fourth of Patanjali's eight stages in the pursuit of godhead, given in his *Yoga Sutras*. It consists of breath-regulating exercises which balance the respiratory functions of the body (See Mind and Body: Yoga; Philosophy).

PRATYANGA

Individual limbs of the human body.

PRAYUGA

Isoscles triangle.

PRAYUTA

One million.

PRISTHASTHI

Backbones.

PRITHVI

Earth. Astronomically one of the three distinct regions of the universe which is again subdivided into three. The sun illuminates and sustains all these regions. One of the five elements, the Panchabhutas.

PURNAMAS/PURANMASHI

Also called Pournami/Purnima. The point when a month becomes 'complete' in the sense it ends with the full moon (See Amavasya). Purnima is traditionally a sacred day (See Festivals: Baisakhi, Buddha Purnima).

PURVA PAKSHA

The bright half of the month ending with the full moon, also called Shukla Paksha. The 15 days of this period are named Sanjananam, Samkalpamanam, Sreyah, Vijnanam, Upakalpamanam, Aayat, Jaanat, Upakiritam, Sambhutam. The nights are called Darsha, Pyayamana, Puryamana, Darsata, Pyaya, Purayanti, Visvarupa, Surita, Purna, Sudarshana, Ira and Purnamasi (See Para Paksha).

PUTABHRT

A laboratory vessel which receives filtrate.

RAHU

A fictitious planet postulated by the ancient Hindus to explain eclipses. Mentioned in both the *Ramayana* and the *Mababbhara-ta*, from Varahamihira's time, it signified the ascending node of the moon (See Ketu; Cosmos: Astrology; Religion: Hinduism – Kshirasagara Manthana; Performing Arts: Music – Muthuswami Dikshitar).

RAJJU

An ancient tape measure, also a term for line.

RAM YANTRA

An original astronomical instrument built by Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743), the Rajput king of Jaipur. Made of stone and

masonry, it consists of a cylindrical instrument open at the top with a pillar at the centre. The floor and inside of the circular wall are graduated and broken into sectors to make observation easier. There are two complementary instruments to determine the positions of heavenly bodies. This instrument can be seen at the Jantar Mantars (observatories) in Delhi and Jaipur (See Jai Prakash, Samrat Yantra, Shasthamsa Yantra).

RASA

Any potent fluid, vegetable or mineral in general, and the metal element mercury in particular; an alchemical term (See Performing Arts: Dance, Music). In common parlance, juice.

RASARNAVAKALPA

A text of 814 verses on alchemy and esoteric tantric rites by an anonymous author from the Vindhya ranges, c. 11th century. The title means 'manifold powers of the ocean of rasa.'

RASAVIDYA

The science of mercury, the metal element, popular with medieval alchemists as a transmuting agent. Another name for alchemy.

RASAYANA

The modern science of chemistry. In medieval times it meant the chemical behaviour of mercury.

RASAYANATANTRA

The branch of Ayurveda dealing with chemical compounds or medicines or treatments that prolong human life and rejuvenate the human body. It is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda mentioned in the *Sushruta Samhita*.

RASHIGATA

Algebraic proof. According to Bhaskara II (1150 AD) this is one of the two kinds of proof available to substantiate any algebraic statement or rule.

RASIS

Twelve signs of the Zodiac, namely, Mesha, Vrishabh, Mithuna, Karkata, Simha, Kanya, Tula, Vrischika, Dhanu, Makara, Kumbha and Mina. However, some astronomers such as Varahamihira have given different names of these signs based on Greek names, namely, Kriya for Mesa, Tavuri for Brasha and Jituma for Mithuna (See Cosmos: Astrology).

REKHAGANITA

The Sanskrit title of the classic geometrical treatise, *Elements*, by Euclid in the 4th century. It was translated into Sanskrit by



Herb garden, Kottakal Arya Vaidyashala

Pandit Jagannatha, the court astronomer of Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743) in the 18th century. The treatise deals mostly with geometrical theorems, though a few sections deal with ratio and proportion and the theory of numbers.

RTA

Ecliptic: the path of the sun through heaven, also called 'Aryaman's mighty path' by the ancient Hindus. The belief goes that this path was created by Varuna, lord of the cosmos (See Philosophy).

RTA

The cosmic law. It also means 'the course of things.' It is a natural law which even the Vedic gods had to follow. The gods were the guardians or practitioners of the law. All natural phenomena, whether it is the falling of rain, the change of seasons or night and day, go by this natural law which governs all natural cycles. Symbolically, it is the deity Varuna who is supposed to have determined the laws of the physical universe (See Philosophy).

SAHASRA

Thousand. An important number in Japa, the repetition of a deity's name to increase concentration. Among the important 'namas' are the *Vishnu Sahasranaman* the

Durga Sahasranaman (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts—Japa).

SALAKYATANTRA

The branch of medicine dealing with the treatment of diseases of the eye, ear, nose, throat and teeth, listed under Ayurveda in the *Sushruta Samhita*.

SALIHOTRA

The father of veterinary science in India, a specialist in the care of horses. Wrote *Haya Ayurveda* or *Salihotra Samhita*, devoted to the treatment of horses, which was translated into Persian, Arabic, Tibetan and English. He and his treatise have become so famous that a horse doctor or vet is called a *salotri* even today.

SAMA/SAMA KARANA

Lit. making equal. Algebraic equation, a term given by Brahmagupta (598 AD).

SAMASTA

The sum obtained by addition. In common parlance, total. Aryabhata II (950 AD) called the sum total of numbers *sarvadhana*.

SAMUDRA

One thousand million. Also another name for the ocean, *sagara*.

SALYAM

A term from the *Sushruta Samhita* for any foreign or extraneous matter which gets lodged in the human body and causes pain to both body and mind.

SAMKHA

Temples.

SAMRAT SIDDHANTA

The Sanskrit name of a classic astronomical treatise, *Almagest*, authored by the Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy in the 2nd century. It was translated into Sanskrit by Pandit Jagannatha, the court astronomer of Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743), in the 18th century. The treatise contained among other things, Ptolemy's theory of epicycles to explain the motions of planets in the sky.

SAMRAT YANTRA

A huge sundial made of stone and masonry invented by Sawai Jai Singh II (1686-1743) of Jaipur. It consists of a huge triangular gnomon with its hypotenuse parallel to the axis of earth. On either side is a quadrant of a circle parallel to the plane of the equator. It has been built at all four of Jai Singh's Jantar Mantars (observatories) at Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain and Varanasi (See Jai Prakash, Ram Yantra, Shasthamsa Yantra).

SANAYU

The ligaments in the human body. According to *Sushruta Sambhita*, these are 900 in number, of four types, namely: those having branches, circular, thick and broad, and perforated ones.

SANDHI

The 210 joints in the human body identified by Sushruta. In Sanskrit grammar this term denotes the conjunction of two words or syllables.

SANDANSA

Tongs (See Food: The Home).

SAUDRA DINA

Solar day, a unit of time. It is defined as the 360th part of a year, mentioned both in the *Vedanga Jyautisha* and *Pancha Siddhantika*.

SHALAKA

Long bones; called 'Ucchalankha' in the *Sushruta Sambhita*.

SHALYA VAIDYA

Surgery. Some of the surgical operations described by Sushruta are aharya (extraction), bhedyā (excision), chedyā (incision), esya (probing), lekhyā (scarification), sivyā (suturing), vedhyā (puncturing) and vishravā (evacuation of fluids).

SHARIRA

Human anatomy. It is one of the ten specific topics discussed in the *Charaka Sambhita*, as understood through dissection.

SHASTHAMSA YANTRA

A sextant built of masonry by Sawai Jai Singh II of the of Jaipur, it is meant to determine the position of the sun in the sky, and may be seen at the Jantar Mantar in Delhi and Jaipur (See Jai Prakash, Ram Yantra, Samrat Yantra).

SHASTRA

A medical or surgical work of recognised authority. The term also denotes surgical instruments of which the *Sushruta Sambhita* describes 20 different types.

SHATA

Hundred.

SHESA

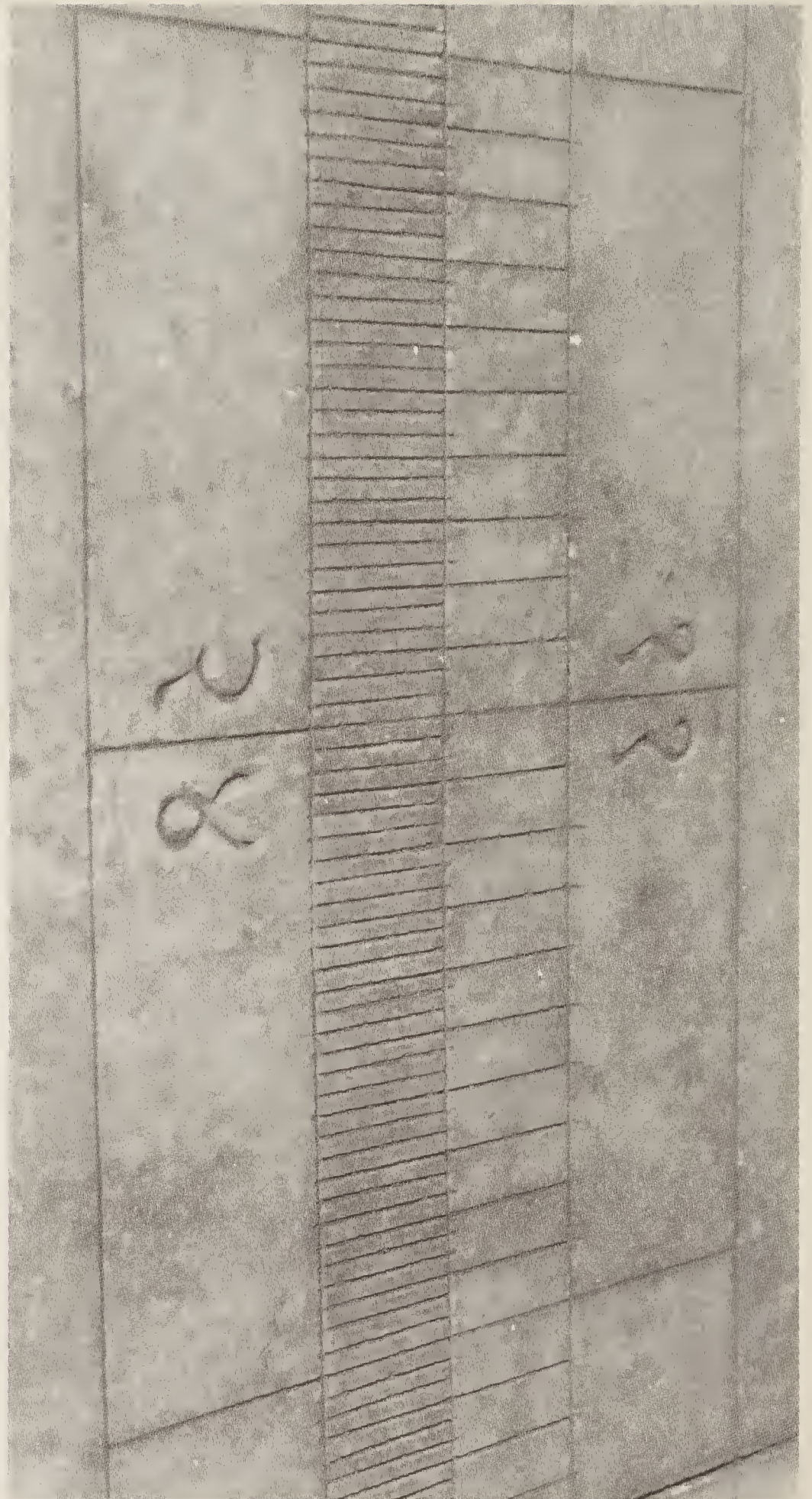
Residue or remainder. What is left after a number is subtracted from another. This definition of the term was given by Aryabhata II (950 AD).

SHRONI-PHALAKA

Hipblades.

SHUKRA

Venus, one of the nine planets of the solar system. Second from the sun, it is seen



Shasthamsa Yantra

every day early in the morning and late in the evening.

SHUNYA

Lit. empty. Zero. The ancient Indian who made this quantum leap is unknown but to give 'nothing' the status of a number is the work of a genius. It triggered off the hidden force in mathematics. The earliest recorded existence of this number is found in Pingala's *Chandah Sutra* written before 200 BC. In medieval times, the number (along with Brahmi numerals) travelled to Arabia through ancient mathematical texts and from there was adopted by European mathematicians. From shunya it became sifer, thereafter cipher and finally zero. In India its other Sanskrit names are kha, gagana, akasa or ananta. Initially, its symbol was a dot (See Bindu).

SHUNYATATVA

Mathematics of zero. The various mathematical operations involving zero were not discovered at one go but over the centuries. For instance, Brahmagupta (598 AD) gave the four mathematical operations involving zero: $A + 0 = A$; $A - 0 = A$; $A \times 0 = 0$ and $A / 0 = 0$, in his *Brahma Sphuta Siddhanta*. But he was wrong in the last operation of division. This was rectified by Bhaskara II (1114 AD) as $A / 0 = \text{infinite}$, the khahara, in *Bijaganita*. In due course, positive and negative numbers were created because of zero.

SIDDHIDRAVYA

The substances that, partaken by a mortal, confer on him various psychic powers, including immortality, rejuvenation and virility. These substances are one of the objectives of the alchemical and iatro-chemical practices popular in medieval India.

SIRA

Defined by some authorities as the veins in the human body.

SIRA KAPALA

Cranium pan bones (See Religion: Hinduism—Concepts).

SROTAS

The orifices in the human body.

STAMBHAKARA

The agent for solidification or 'fixation' of minerals and metals.

STHALI

The cauldron for boiling liquids.

STHANA

Place value notation. For instance, a number like 625 can be represented as $600 \times 1 + 20 \times 1 + 5 \times 1 = 6 \times (100 \times 1) + 2 \times (10 \times 1) + 5 \times (1)$. The place value of 5 is first; 2 is tenth

and 6 is hundredth. This system of denoting numbers, made Indian numbers, including zero, simple to handle and effective in calculation, and led to their acceptance all over the world.

SUCHI

Surgical needle. Also an Asamyukta hasta mudra (single hand gesture) in classical Indian dance (See Performing Arts: Dance: Mudras).

SULABHA PARIPRACCHAKA

A researcher in sulabha or geometry.

SULABHA SUTRAS

Manuals for the construction of altars commonly used in various Vedic rituals in ancient times. The word sulabha or sulva means to measure and sutra means aphorisms. They were written over the centuries by eminent geometers, the oldest and biggest being that by Baudhayana (800 BC). These sutras are sometimes referred to individually by the names of the mathematicians who wrote them, for example, *Baudhayana Sulabha Sutas*, *Apastamba Sulabha Sutas* or *Manava Sulabha Sutas*.

SUMERU PARVATA

The earth's North Pole, a term from Hindu cosmology (See Badavamukha).

SURA

Alcohol.

SURYA SIDDHANTA

Varahamihira's treatise of Vedic astronomy, in vogue with almanac-makers for several centuries (See *Pancha Siddhantika*).

SUSHRUTA

Recognised as the father of plastic surgery today, this surgeon was born to the Vedic sage Vishwamitra in the 6th century BC. He learnt surgery and medicine in the hermitage of Dhanvantri at Varanasi. Authored the seminal medical treatise the *Sushruta Samhita*. His method of nose surgery spread worldwide over the centuries.

SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

The treatise on surgery written by the eminent surgeon Sushruta and revised by Nagarjuna in the 4th century BC. It was originally written as *Sushruta Salya-Tantra* around the 6th century BC. It described novel surgical operations, surgical instruments, the influence of seasons and winds, classified the animal kingdom, leeches, worms, medical botany, and methods of surgical training. It remained a standard surgical work for several centuries and was translated into Arabic as *Kitab-Shaw-Shoon-al-Hindi* or *Kitab-i-Susrad* in the

8th century AD.

SVASTIKA

Forceps. Sushruta identifies 24 different kinds with mouths resembling a lion, a jackal, a crow, an owl and so on.

SVEDANA

The process of steaming.

TAILAYANTRA

An apparatus for the extraction of oil from vegetable substances. Tailam – oil in Sanskrit.

TALUKA

Palatal cavity. As an administrative term, a Taluka is a certain circumscribed area.

TANTRA

The textile loom or warp. A number of Sanskrit terms employ metaphors of cloth and its creation (See Performing Arts: Theatre – Sutradhar; Handicraft: Woven Textiles).

TARA

Silver. Commonly called Chandi, of the moon.

TARAPATRA

Silver foil, leaf or plate.

TASARA

The shuttle for weaving textiles in ancient times (See Handicraft: Woven Textiles).

TIKSHNA

Cast iron or steel.

TRAIRASIKA

The rule of three. It gives the rule of proportion among three quantities. For instance, a problem on the rule of three has the following form: If S yields P, what will A yield? This rule was known to Hindu mathematicians from the beginning of the Christian era. It became very popular in the Arab world and then Europe, as 'The Golden Rule'.

TRIDHATU

The three all-pervading humours in the living body: vayu, pitta and kapha. The presence of all three simultaneously in the body is essential for its existence. All the changes in the bodily processes are variations and manifestations of these humours. Any imbalance in them leads to abnormalities and maladies.

TRIKONA/TRIKARNA/TRYASRA

Triangle or three-sided geometrical figure.

TRINAUSADHI

The other division of the vegetable kingdom, mostly grasses, which are not employed in alchemical practices. These medicinal plants are considered 'non-heavenly.'

TRISANDHYA

Dawn, noon and sunset – the three sacred hours of a day.

TULA

Weighing scales. Also a zodiac sign (See Cosmos: Calendar).

TVACHA

Human skin, of which *Sushruta Samhita* says there are seven layers.

UKHA

A boiler or cauldron made of clay used in medieval chemical labs.

ULUKHALA-MUSALA

Mortar-pestle used in Ayurvedic medicine.

UMASVATI

Nothing is known about him except that he wrote the *Tattvarthadigam* in which he gave a novel method of classification of animals. He wrote of four categories, depending on the number of senses a species possessed and used, like touch, taste, sight, hearing and smell.

URAS

Breast bone. Sternum.

URDHVASVASTIKA

The zenith of the khagola or celestial sphere, the point right above the observer (earth), which is located in the centre of the Khagola (See Adha Svastika).

URUNALAKA

Thighs bones. In *Urubhanga* (The Broken Thigh), a one-act play by Bhasa (c. 10th century), the protagonist Duryodhana dies on stage, a unique contravention of the *Natyashastra*'s rule against unhappy endings (See Performing Arts: Theatre).

UTTARA

The succeeding number – the one on the right of antya, the last. For instance, in 2876, if 2 is antya, 8 is utara. Brahmagupta (598 AD) used these terms to obtain the cube of a number.

UTTARAYANA

Summer solstice or the point from which the sun takes the northwardly course in the sky, from the inception of Capricorn to the onset of Cancer. It is a phase believed to be associated with the gods, especially the seasons of Vasanta or spring, Grishma or summer and Varsha or monsoon (See Dakshinayana).

VAGBHATA

Supposed author of the medical treatises *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Ashtanga Hrudaya Samhita* he succeeded Sushruta in eminence. Born in the northwest, c. 6th-7th century, in a Brahmin community but was

influenced by Buddhism. He had the same status as that of Galen in the west.

VAISHESIKA SUTRAS

One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu thought. It deals with the conception of substance which was propounded by the sage Kanada at a pre-Buddhist date. Other physical concepts dealt with are motion, attributes, space, time and atomism. Initially, this system recognised both perception and inference as a means of acquiring knowledge and did not recognise the authority of the *Vedas*. Both proponents of this system and the Nyaya system of thought later elaborated upon it, forming what is today known as the *Nyaya-Vaishesika* conception of substance (See Philosophy).

VALUKAYANTRA

A type of sand-bath employed by alchemists to heat substances uniformly for long periods.

VANASPATI

One of the four classes into which plants are divided by Sushruta.

VARAHAMIHIRA

Born in 499 AD in a village near Ujjain, he is more popular as the author of *Pancha Siddhantika*, though he merely edited and updated this treatise. A versatile scientist whose fields of interest were as wide-ranging as astrology, astronomy, geology, agriculture, meteorology, hydrology and ecology. He knew much and wrote of it in a lively style. His other classic works are *Brihat Samhita* and *Brahmajataka*. He died in 587 AD as a celebrated astrologer.

VARGA

Square. The term, coined by Brahmagupta (598 AD) literally means rows or troops of familiar things. In addition to square power, the term also denotes a square figure or its area.

VARGAMULA

Square root.

VARNA

Symbol. Also means colour and letters of the alphabet. Using symbols or colours for unknown quantities in algebra was in vogue from the time of Aryabhatta I (499 AD) or even earlier. But it was later, around the time of Bhaskara II (1150 AD), that the trend began to represent the unknown quantities by letters of the alphabet.

VATA

The upholder of both structure and function of the body. It is the agent which can do or undo things in the body. It has six characteristics: dryness, lightness, coldness, hard-

ness, roughness and clearness. Also described as an agent in the universe with characteristics akin to those in the body. A term for the environment, *vatavaran*.

VAYU

Air, one of the three humours essential for the existence of the living body. It controls the creation, growth and disintegration of all life, with several properties such as dryness, coldness and lightness. Believed to course through the body at high speed. But in a deranged state, *dosha*, it causes considerable pain. There are five kinds of *vayu*: *prana*, *udana*, *samana*, *vyana* and *apana*. The most important is the *udana* *vayu*, responsible for vocal sounds, including speech and song (See Pitta, Kapha).

VEDANGA JYAUTISHA

A small compendium of basic astronomical rules composed around 1200 BC by sage Lagadha. The astronomical data it gives suggest that the compendium was composed in the Kashmir Valley. It is now available in two forms, *Rig Veda Jyautisha* and *Yajur Veda Jyautisha* which are similar in content but differ in verse. It is believed that even the Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, consulted this compendium in the 3rd century BC, while planning the precise duration of his Buddhist pilgrimage. Later Jaina texts also incorporated the teachings of this compendium.

VEDHANA

The process of transmutation of baser metals like copper or lead into gold or silver.

VENA

A Vedic sage who discovered the planet Venus or Shukra.

VIDYADHARAYANTRA

An apparatus consisting of two pots placed one above the other. The upper one contains cold water and the lower one cinabar, an ore of mercury. The lower one is heated to obtain mercury.

VILOMAGATI

Method of inversion or calculating backwards, a practice common from ancient times.

VISHA

The poison obtained from the body of a reptile, such as a snake.

VISHAHARAS

The physician who treated poison. To practise his art, he had to go out into the streets and call out for patients. Traditionally he lived in a house surrounded by gardens of medicinal plants, as did other physicians.



Ulukhala-Musala or Hamal Dasta

VISHAKAMBHA/VYASA

Diameter of a circle (See Chakra).

VISODAKA

Poisonous water, believed to be of three sorts with separate characteristics, coloured red, yellow and black.

VRITTI

Physiology of the human body.

VRTTAPHALA

Area of a circle.

VYADHI

Pathology, the medical science that deals with the cause and nature of disease detailed in the *Charaka Sambita*. Today a common term for disease.

VYASTA TRAIRASIKA

The inverse rule of three. This rule was known to ancient Hindu mathematicians.

YAJNASALA

Lit. the place of sacrifice, yajna. A primitive laboratory with a variety of apparatus. The basis of later alchemic and iatro-chemical labs.

YAMANAKSHATRA

The last 14 nakshatras from Anuradha to Bharani (See Devanakshatra, Nakshatra; Cosmos: Astrology).

YAMYOTTARA VRTTA

Meridian. The circle passing through the zenith, nadir, north and south points on the khagola or celestial sphere (See Khagola).

YANTRA

Blunt surgical instrument. Sushruta describes 100 different types including the hands of a surgeon.

YAVAT-TAVAT

An arbitrary quantity. It literally means 'as many as' or 'so much as.' This is mentioned in the *Sthanariga Sutra* (before 300 BC). It is also called yadrccha, vancha or kamika, terms used in algebraic equations.

YOGA SUTRAS

A treatise by Patanjali aimed at achieving god-head through yogic practices. They show the path to attain mastery over both mind and body so that each individual may realise the divinity within. They are divided into eight physical and mental disciplines to be pursued

consecutively: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Medically, these practices are found to lead to a balanced mind and healthy body (See Mind and Body: Yoga).

YOGA TARA

The principal star of a nakshatra or constellation, often the brightest in its group of stars.

YOJANA

League, a now defunct measure of distance. It was employed for measuring astronomical distances, such as the orbit of the moon, the sun and planets. Today the term means a plan.

YUGA

Puranic unit of time (See Cosmos: Calendar). Centuries after the Puranic age, a Yuga came to mean a cycle of five years, called Samvatsara, Parivatsara, Idvatsara (also Iduvatsara or Anuvatsara) and Vatsara.



VISUAL ARTS

Shilpa Chitra

Religion, nature and human
interaction have been the three basic
inspiring forces for
Indian artists down the ages,
although the medium
of expression has diffused from
stone and canvas to
cloth and celluloid

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

To trace the history of painting and sculpture, it is essential to go back to the Indus Valley Civilization that dates from 2,500 BC to the 1st century BC. Despite the gap of several centuries between then and now, and the paucity of artistic material, it is still possible to understand the trend through iconographic, symbolic and mystical concepts. Though religion – Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Tantra – has been the major creative force in Indian art, the Indian painter or sculptor has a humanistic approach which expresses a range of emotion and is based on an understanding of natural dynamism, or the observation and perception of life. This is borne out by the various periods in the history of Indian art: early and medieval painting, including Rajasthan's miniatures is generally religious but also witty and romantic and reflect the spirit of the times. The Bodhisattva image of Sarnath and Mathura, the rock-cut sculptures of the Deccan from the 6th, 7th and 8th century AD, the paintings of Ajanta, Bagh and Ellora could not have been possible without a feeling for the varied facets of human life (See Archaeology/Architecture; History: Dynasties; Holy Places: Temples).

PREHISTORIC ART

Prehistoric art made its appearance some 20,000 years ago in the upper Paleolithic period when man found an outlet for his creativity by painting on rock shelters and caves. Using roughly crafted tools, he made likenesses of animals and human forms, a natural outcome of his struggle for survival.

Paintings on the cave walls, sculptures on bone and stone and other sharp-edged objects are found in this period. There is no particular school or style, but there are various stages in the Prehistoric art, like the Neolithic, Mesolithic, Paleolithic and Chalcolithic periods. Prehistoric art is generally classified as 'Naturalist,' and its subject evolved from stage to stage.

Schools of Art

HARAPPA AND MOHENJODARO

Harappan art goes back to 3 millennia BC and shows a high degree of proficiency which suggests much earlier development. The perfect modelling of human and animal figures at Mohenjodaro and Harappa are testimony to the technical skill of craftsmen who could cast images in metal using the (now rare) wax process. They could cast in clay and chisel in stone with ease, creating an art worthy of these great centres of civilisation.

TANTRA

Tantra is as old as Indian civilisation, going back to Mohenjodaro and Harappa (c. 3500 BC) and is derived from the Sanskrit root, tan, meaning to expand. It was born out of the materialistic (as opposed to idealistic) Indian philosophy. It is commonly held that Tantra is tribal in origin. Fully developed Tantra conceives reality as the interplay of the deities Shiva and Shakti, the primordial male and female. Its central focus is the human body as the microcosm of the universe. Shiva is considered as the Lord of the Yogis and is worshipped in the linga or phallic form (See Religion: Hinduism - Concepts).

MAURYAN

The Mauryan era from the 4th century BC onwards saw great ferment in the intellectual and political life of India. Stone was used for the first time during this period for artistic expression. Mauryan sculpture is represented by the columns, popularly known as 'lats,' bearing the inscriptions of Ashoka (3rd century BC). They are tall, tapering monoliths of polished sandstone rising to an average height of 12 m from the base. They stand isolated in sacred sites as self-contained units in open space. Some of these pillars might have been standing before the days of Ashoka, and the animal figures on the columns show the same naturalism found in the Indus seals (See History: Dynasties).

POST MAURYAN

The beginning of the classical movement in Indian art may be traced from the end of the Mauryan period (around 200 BC). The co-ordination between the solid and its gliding linear movement constitutes the plasticity of classical Indian art. The artistic centres of the north, the south of Orissa as well as the south. Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhi Gaya, Mathura and other places are representative of Mauryan art. Interestingly, the size of the forms did not depend on nearness or distance but on the functional importance of each object.

SANCHI STUPAS

The great stupa at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh is the most impressive of the early Buddhist establishments. The circular balustrade and the four toranas (gateways) at the entrances between the quadrants are similar to those of Bharhut. The carvings of the stupa depict life in all its manifestations through the stories of the Buddha in direct and expressive language. This strong sense of simple naturalism is its main characteristic (See Archaeology/Architecture).

SUNGA PERIOD

As the power of the Mauryas weakened, Pushyamitra Sunga came to power in Magadha, Simukha Satavahana in the Deccan, and Kharavela in Kalinga. Art flourished in all the three kingdoms (See History: Dynasties).

Sunga sculpture is characterised by a simplicity best illustrated in the Bharhut stupas of the 2nd century BC. It is here that scenes from the life of the Buddha and the *Jatakas* are first depicted.

BHARHUT

Bharhut in Nagodh district of central India (2nd century BC) represents a major artistic achievement of the period. The stupa, which is a mound supposedly to enshrine sacred relics, usually of the Buddha himself, is surrounded by railings.

The sculpture of the Buddhist stupa railings shows guardians Yakshas and devas (nature spirits), and incidents from the life of Buddha and *Jataka* stories. At Bharhut, there is no anthropomorphic representation of Buddha. Even the scenes from Buddha's life are only depicted by symbols, such as a pipal tree, a throne or umbrella (See Archaeology/Architecture).

GANDHARA SCHOOL

Though the earliest examples of Buddhist sculpture in stone date from the reign of the Mauryan emperor, Ashoka (3rd century BC), the Buddha was usually depicted through symbols like a throne or a pair of feet. The Gandhara School initiated the idea and established the practice of portraying the Buddha in bodily form around the 1st century BC. Gandhara art was encouraged by Kanishka the great Kushana king and his successors, the Sakas (See History). There are countless Buddha images which at a later stage changed into Bodhisattva images thus reflecting the changing pattern of Buddhist iconography (See Mathura School).

BENARES SCHOOL

A separate school of sculpture was established in Benares (Varanasi) during the

early Gupta period. The majority of these sculptures are Buddhist and the base reliefs, very different from those of Bharhut and Sanchi, represent scenes from the life of Buddha. These sculptures reflecting Hindu classical literature, the *Jataka* stories belong to 4th and 5th century AD (See Religion: Buddhism).

PATALIPUTRA SCHOOL

The splendid base reliefs from Chandimau in Patna district which came from a Shaiva temple representing scenes from Kiratarjuniyam is one of the best examples of this period. Some of the best images discovered in eastern India have been found at Bodhi Gaya and at Nalanda. At Gaya many of them are worshipped inside the great Shaiva monastery. The standing Buddha image in Sultanganj in the Bhagalpur district is another example of early Gupta art.

GUPTA PERIOD

The Gupta period is described as the golden age of the classical tradition. Gupta sculpture derives its plasticity from Mathura, its elegance from that of Amaravati with emphasis on the human figure. Among the earliest examples of Gupta sculpture is an image of Bodhisattva belonging to the Mathura School and approximately dated to the 4th century AD.

MATHURA SCHOOL

The Mathura School of sculptural art, famous for the use of varying shades of red sandstone, had its origin in the 1st century AD. Though essentially Buddhist in nature (some authorities say it produced images of the Buddha before the Gandhara School) it embraced elements from Jainism and Hinduism also. Among the many images found in this style are the famous Yaksha and Yakshi figures which are believed to have originated from folk tradition. Other deities found are Gajalakshmi, Mahisasuramardini, Vishnu, Shiva, Naga/Nagini and Kubera. Terracotta figures are also found in Mathura art.

AMARAVATI

Sculpture at Amaravati represents the peak of Satavahana art. The rail around the stupa of Amaravati with its rich carving illustrates *Jataka* stories and scenes from the Buddhist's life. Four periods of sculptural work may be distinguished here. The first is contemporaneous with Bharhut sculpture; the second dates to 100 AD which comprises casting slabs from the stupa depicting three principal scenes from the Buddha's life; the third period is represented by the magnificent rails of the 2nd century AD; the fourth is the delicately carved chaitya slabs with elongated figures and Buddha images.

NAGARJUNAKONDA

The sculpture of Nagarjunakonda is Buddhist though the ruling royal house of the Ikshvaku was Hindu (See History: Dynasties). Belonging to the 3rd century AD the sculpted figures are more slim and slender than those of the Satavahana period. Traces of Scythian and Sri Lankan influence are evident in the Nagarjunakonda sculptures.

PAHARPUR (Eastern India)

The eastern version of classical idiom distinguished by a certain amount of sensuousness and emotionalism reached its peak in the Paharpur sculptures. The smooth and suave contours tend to be heavy but the sculptures are lively and powerful compositions.

AIHOLE

Aihole in the Badami taluka of the Bijapur district was probably the earliest capital of the Chalukyas from the 6th century onwards. The temple movement of Aihole was indigenous and owed little to the Guptas. It used blocks of stones for vertical construction. Statues of Shiva, Durga, Brahma, Ravana, Surya adorn the temples. Some sculptures have erotic themes.

KAILASANATHA TEMPLE

Towards the end of the 7th century AD, the Pallava King Rajasimha built the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram (See History: Dynasties; Holy Places: Temples). Traces of line and colour in this cave temple indicate the greatness of this lost period in painting. There is a striking figure of the dancing Shiva. The lines composing this and other paintings are fragmentary. The colours have also faded.

MAHABALIPURAM

During the reign of Mahamalla, the Pallava ruler of Kanchi in the 7th century AD, free standing monolithic shrines were carved from outcrops of boulders. The gigantic open-air rock-cut depiction of the myth of Kiratarjuna has been carved in high relief and includes men and animals, gods and ascetics, Naga deities and semi-divine beings all life size. An intense naturalism distinguishes all figures. The Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram sculptures are the culmination of the classical trend in the south (See Archaeology/Architecture; History: Dynasties; Holy Places: Temples).

PALA PERIOD

Around the 8th century, the Pala dynasty gave rise to a new school of art in eastern India. The sculptures – figures of gods and goddesses – use the medium of stone, bronze and terracotta. Most of these sculptures are Buddhist but Brahmanism also

contributed to the production of art. This was also the period when Buddhism was strongly imbued with tantric ideas. Images of Buddha, Bodhisattavas, Avalokiteswara, Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Mahisasuramardini (Devi) appear during the period.

THANJAVUR SCHOOL

The major kinds of painting found at Thanjavur (or Tanjore School) comprise deities and saints, portraiture both courtly and secular, painting on exotic media and illustrated manuscripts. Generally, the artists were craftsmen adept at several related crafts. Arts of this period are highly functional and were made for a specific demand. One characteristic of the style is that its forms, in spite of a certain rigidity became a general form of ornament. Colours are strong and vibrant. There may be a deep green, strong blue or red background while the principal figures are mainly white or yellow, green or blue. Red and blue or red and green arrangements often dominate the composition. Colours used are pure and flat and variations are produced by texture and surface decoration. The use of the colour gold is outstanding.

LEPAKSHI

The Lepakshi temple situated in the Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh reflects Vijayanagara art and provides an important link in the chain of art history in south India (See History: Dynasties; Holy Places: Temples). The flowing delicate lines can first be seen in some paintings at the Kailasanatha temple at Ellora and later in the Jain miniatures of western India. The paintings are mostly descriptive and rendered completely in flat patterns suggesting only a single plane, without any depth on the surface. Figures used are divine, human, animal, bird or tree, to illustrate a story. Their colours are earth-red, black, green, yellow ochre, white and gray. Blue is significantly missing.

VIJAYANAGARA SCHOOL

The highpoint of 16th century sculpture of the Vijayanagara period is reflected in the shallow cut friezes and small panels of the Hazara Rama temple, the Throne temple and the Vithoba temple at Hampi. The sculptures display vibrant and lively energy (See Holy Places: Temples).

HALEBID

The temple at Halebid, 16 km north-east of Belur consists of two different sanctums, each with a vestibule. The navaranga (central hall) and bull mandapa are in fact two complete temples, joined by short corridors, both standing on a common plinth.

The linga in the south shrine bears the name of Vishnuvardhana and the one in the north has the name of Shantaleswara. Two Nandi mandapas with two gigantic carved bulls are on the east. The walls are decorated with images from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and the *Puranas*. The artistic combination of horizontal and vertical lines and the play of light and shade is unique. No two canopies in the building are alike (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Temples).

BELUR

The Hoysalas (c. 1110-1152) were the greatest local builders of Hindu and Jain temples and the Chennakeshava temple at Belur is one of the most exquisite specimens of their art. The shrine consists of a garbhagriha, a sukhanasi and a navaranga. Episodes from the *Mahabharata*, images of Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Hanuman, Kubera, Garuda, Lakshminarayana are found in this temple (See Archaeology/Architecture).

There are about 80 large images of gods and goddesses. Sculptured friezes of elephants, lions, horsemen, turreted pilasters decorate the niches.

The Belur sculptures portray the human form especially the female form, with a keen sense of realism (See Archaeology/Architecture).

SOMNATHPUR

The temple at Somnathpur situated in a courtyard is a 'three-celled' structure, the main cell facing the east and the other two north and south, surmounted by three elegantly carved towers identical in design and execution. A railed parapet on both sides of the entrance has horizontal friezes of elephants, horsemen, scroll-work, scenes from the epics and *Puranas* and miniature erotic sculpture. Above them are exquisite filigree stone windows. Altogether there are 194 images which portray amongst others, Brahma, Shiva, Ganesha, Hara-Parvati, Venugopal (Krishna), Parashurama, Lakshmi and Saraswati. There are scenes from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagvata Purana*.

SRAVANABELAGOLA

Among the early all-stone sculptural temples in the south, the earliest extant Jain examples are the group of three simple vimanas called Chandragupta Basti on the Chandragiri hill at Sravanabelagola in Karnataka, dated to 850 AD. In the intervening space between the two vimanas is a third shrine with a flat roof. The facade of the ardha-mandapa of the Chandragupta Basti was covered by a finely carved soapstone

trellis in the 12th century, with a doorway at the centre, embellished by a frieze of narrative sculptures including the traditional story of Chandragupta Maurya's association with Bhadrabahu and other Jain sculptures (See Religion: Jainism).

CHOLA

Chola bronzes (9th century), in particular the image of the dancing Shiva and the graceful figures of Parvati, are the artistic culmination of Indian art. The harmonising of form and content, technical expertise in the use of the material and execution of figures and decorative details are superb. The Nataraja is a classic example but other exquisite ones are those of Mahishasurmardini, Bhikshatanas, Vishnu, Krishna with Rukmini, Satyabhama, Somaskanda, Shiva and so on.

KHAJURAHO

The Chandela rulers of Bundelkhand, Kalanjara and Mahoba in central India built numerous temples between 950 and 1150, decorated profusely with erotic sculptures.

The Khajuraho temples are dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and several goddesses. There are also a group of Jain temples similarly decorated with erotic sculptures but stylistically different in concept from the Brahminical temples (See Archaeology/Architecture; Holy Places: Jain Shrines, Temples).

WESTERN INDIA

The Surya temple of Modhera in Gujarat and the temple of Mount Abu are the most important medieval structures in western India (See Holy Places: Temples).

The remarkable Jain marble temples of Mount Abu are important more from a decorative than sculptural viewpoint. The 11th century sculpture of the step-well of Modhera typifies the high water mark of medieval art in Gujarat.

MADURAI SCHOOL

The sculptures of Madurai are inevitably associated with the Meenakshi temple built in the 17th century under the Nayak rulers. Another feature of Madurai sculpture is the Yali – the rearing horse with rider and other fantastic animal forms serving as pillar supports and brackets.

KONARAK

The Konarak temple is constructed of stone to resemble a juggernaut, a gigantic solar chariot with 12 pairs of wheels drawn by seven spirited horses. At Konarak, the sculpted figures on the base are often within the reach of the worshipper's hands. The erotic sculptures epitomize the loving relationship between man and woman. The



Bronze in Chola tradition

artist's target was to achieve the highest eroticism within an ordered building, mirroring an ideal of an ordered society. The Konarak lovers seem to gather into themselves the Sun god's vital energy – a transmutation of power into love (See Holy Places: Temples).

COMPANY PERIOD

'Company painting' under the East India Company's patronage made its first appearance in Madras Presidency in the early 18th century and spread to eastern India. It began to decline in the second half of the 19th century. These paintings record many features of Indian life. The artists were prolific in the depiction of trades, occupations and tools. They attempted to adjust their styles to British needs and paint subjects of British appeal, gave up gouache and began to paint in water colour on European paper. Their favourite subjects were costumes, trades, crafts, methods of transport and festivals often portraying the Hindu deities and temples (See History: British Period).

BENGAL PAINTINGS (OIL)

Little is known about the early paintings of Bengal. The medium was obviously learnt

from foreign artists but in the latter part of the 18th and in the 19th century it was used to paint pictures which were largely indigenous in subject, iconography and style. Traditionally these paintings have been labelled as 'Dutch Bengal School' which suggest that the medium may have been learnt from the Dutch. The existence of a number of oil paintings originating from Chinsura, Chandernagore and Calcutta confirm that the technique was European. Oil paintings of this type, however, are clearly a part of Bengali heritage. They can be divided into a few types. Iconic pictures of the Hindu pantheon, paintings with narrative themes, portraits and secular themes, Durga, Kali, Annapurna and stories from Hindu mythology were popular subjects.

MADHUBANI

Paintings are an integral part of life in this area of Bihar. People of all castes and social order painted their homes regularly. They were primarily wall paintings connected with their rituals and generally done by the women of the household.

Favoured subjects for the bridal chamber included gods and goddesses and auspicious symbols. The paintings are, as it were, a casual collection of images, made in vibrant colours. Outlines are rather thick. Paper came to be used at a later stage.

SHILAVATI

Sihore is an ancient city in Saurashtra, now a part of Gujarat. The local artists executed the frescoes with vigour covering large areas in vivid watercolours, portraying rulers, soldiers and politicians. Their indigenous style of painting came to be known as the 'Shilavat' style. The frescoes do not exist anymore, except as replicas in some old playing cards. But even today in Jamnagar, Dwaraka and Junagarh one comes across huge paintings on mythological subjects and particularly the Krishna legend executed in bright colours on the walls of the old residential buildings and even on mud walls dating back to the 19th century.

KALAMKARI

The tradition of Kalamkari painting is very old (See Design: Painted Textiles). The fine craftsmen of this pen and brush technique painted the narratives of religious legends. Over the years, all the craftsmen producing Kalamkari, whether for Muslim or Hindu use, were Hindus who worked within their own family structure. While in the Masulipatnam area many weavers took to the craft, in the Kalahasti region, the craftspeople the Balijas, a caste generally

involved in bangle making. What has now remained as true Kalamkari are the figurative wall hangings.

NATHDWARA

Nathdwara is a small pilgrimage town in Rajasthan. The word Nathdwara means gateway of the Lord. Nathdwara has been the headquarters of the chief deity of the Pushtimarga sect, founded by Sri Vallabhacharya in the 16th century.

In Nathdwara, art is the occupational heritage of the whole joint family. There are two different painter subcastes, the Jangira Brahmins and the Adi Gour Brahmins.

Painters of Nathdwara have a large repertoire of styles and subject matter. The paintings of Srinathji (the town's presiding deity, Krishna) are quite popular. Other prestigious genres include: miniature painting, Pichwai paintings on cloth, calendar art in addition to landscape, portrait, wall painting, skin decoration, drama, costumes and so on.

PUPPET

Killekyatas is a folk art form of south India using leather puppets. The original practitioners were a wandering tribe of outstanding entertainers who came from Maharashtra. There is documentary evidence of their existence in Bijapur in the early 16th century. Their antiquity can be traced back to 12th century or earlier.

Today, the leather puppeteers of Karnataka generally take their themes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (Arjuna's heroic son Bhadrabahuana was a favourite subject with the warlike Marathas). Most of these artists originally migrated from Maharashtra. Puppets are cut out from the hides of goat or deer. When cleaned and tanned they take the form of translucent cardboard on which different shapes are traced, cut out and painted in luminous hues. The colours made from herbs and minerals are bright red, indigo, olive green and black. The puppets usually in profile, often show both the eyes – a combination of realism and abstraction. They depict the heroes and heroines from the epics or gods and goddesses from the *Puranas* (See Performing Arts: Puppets, Theatre).

RAVI VARMA (1848–1906)

Ravi Varma began to paint at a time when Indian art was passing through a crisis of identity. Ravi Varma belongs to the mid 19th century when the upper classes were enthusiastically assimilating western ideas. He belonged to the ruling family of Travancore and in his early period came into con-

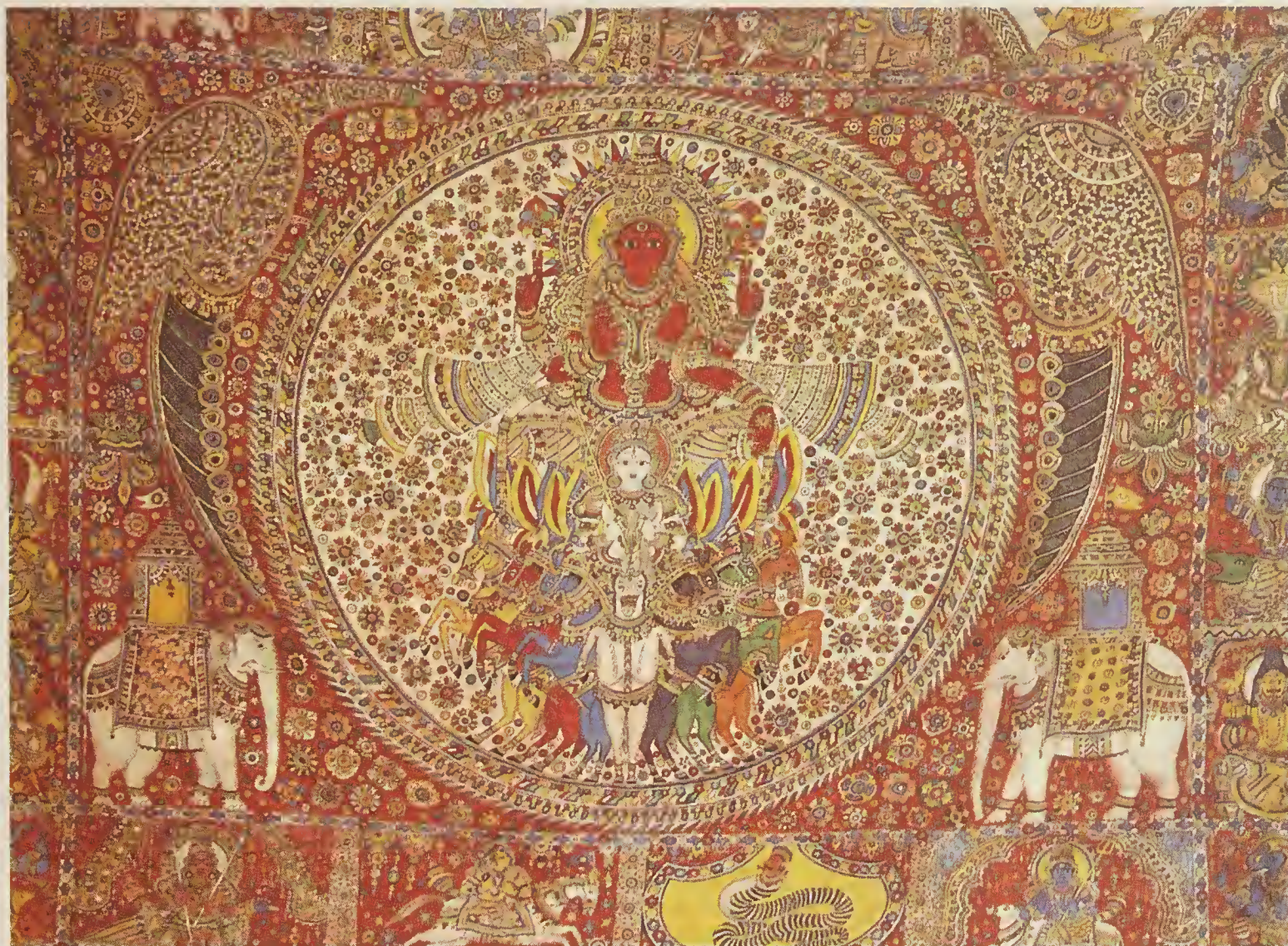
tact with some English artists from whom he learnt the oil technique which was then not prevalent in India. He is the first successful oil painter in India. His subjects were all drawn from Indian life. He painted from the epics, legends and *Puranas* and used Indian models as figures. Harishchandra, Shakuntala, Sri Krishna and Balarama, Lady in Moonlight are some of his works. He did many portraits which were commissioned by various rajas in India. He started the lithography press in 1894. Many of his paintings were then printed and spawned a new genre - calendar art, that became a household staple across India.

BENGAL SCHOOL

Out of the chaotic conditions of the late 19th century in India emerged many social and cultural changes. The Bengal School is the name given to a new style of painting that was the first aesthetic development to appear at the turn of the century. The Bengal School, while it originated in Bengal with the work of Abanindranath Tagore, nevertheless soon became national and identified with nationalist aspirations. The major and minor productions of this school ranged between 1895 and 1947. This period is also known as the Renaissance in Indian art. The subjects chosen by painters of this school were literary, taken from the epics, legends and Indian history. There were leanings towards the past, both in a textual as well as stylistic sense. The artists in an attempt to rise against the British academic taste and aesthetics chose Indian people to look at their own glorious past. Ajanta and Mughal art were their main stylistic source. Abanindranath also added the lyrical and mystic quality by introducing a new technique of wash painting born of experimenting with Japanese watercolour painting. Ananda Coomaraswamy, the Sri Lankan art historian settled down in India and along with E.B. Havell, the principal of Calcutta Art School, was instrumental in introducing the Bengal School artists. The Tagore family played a significant role in shaping the new ideals of art which was basically anti-British. Rabindranath, Abanindranath, Gaganendranath, Nandalal Bose, Ajit Kumar Haldar, Ramendranath Chakravorty were some of the leading artists of the school.

LEPAKSHI (VIJAYANAGARA PERIOD)

Innumerable sculptures of great quality decorate the temple of Lepakshi, representing salient features of Vijayanagara art. The subjects and motifs of these sculptures are icons and divine stories, human forms, animals and birds, trees and floral, geometrical and other abstract designs. The carv-



Surya's chariot, Kalamkari from Andhra Pradesh

ings of human forms are those of acrobats, cowherds, musicians and ordinary folk which are outside the strict limitations of iconography and with them the artists exercised their utmost freedom. The sculptures are done in small scale about 35 to 40 cm in height in low relief. Among the sculptures are Mata Sundari, mukha mantapa and kalyana mantapa. The forms of animals and birds are in different styles, trees, mountains and other objects are stylised abstractions. The story of Siriyala and Kiratarjuniyam are the two depicted in Lepakshi sculptures. The principal icon portrayed in these sculptures is that of Veerabhadra, a terrible emanation of Shiva. Besides there is a colossal Nagalinga.

Cave Art

BHAJA

The rock-cut caves at Bhaja near Pune are contemporary to the rock caves of north India and date to the 2nd century BC. These carvings in their powerful naturalism and treatment of costumes recall the Bharhut

tradition. The heavy and bulging relief appears to have emerged from the matter of the rock itself due to pressure from within.

UDAIGIRI AND KHANDAGIRI

The two adjoining hills of Udaigiri and Khandagiri near Bhubaneswar (Orissa) contain a number of Jain caves that date to the second half of the 1st century BC. A few of them have sculptured friezes and panels decorating their facades.

Carvings in the different caves are varied but belong mainly to the Bharhut, Bodhi Gaya and Sanchi Schools.

AJANTA

Among the most beautiful frescoes in the world, Ajanta and Ellora paintings are reflective of the continually evolving concepts of religious trends which grew from the Hinayana to the Mahayana period ranging from 2nd century BC to 9th century AD. The Ajanta caves were executed during the time of the Satavahanas, the Vakatakas, the Guptas and Chalukyas (See Archaeology/Architecture; Religion: Buddhism;

History: Dynasties).

BAGH CAVES

Ajanta and Bagh, the two great centres of Buddhist fresco painting in India, are situated among the southern slopes of the Vindhya hills in Gwalior. The nine caves, the work of Mahayana Buddhists, date back to the imperial Guptas and show a royal procession moving down the street with elephants and a cavalcade of horsemen while crowds watch from terraces.

Costumes are not as varied as in Ajanta. There is little landscape in Bagh paintings but there is awareness of the quietening influence of nature. Numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were part of the original scheme but time has effaced most of them. The flaming energy of Buddhist art flickered and died in Bagh (See Religion: Buddhism).

KANHERI

The monastery of Kanheri, 40 km from Bombay, belongs to the end of the 2nd century AD. As at Karli there are pairs of figures



Details from Ajanta fresco

sculpted on the verandah of the Chaitya cave. Apart from these figures, there are some splendid Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

KARLI

The rock-cut monasteries were situated in western India and were built about the beginning of the Christian era or even later.

The pairs of figures on the verandah of the Chaitya possess great dignity and freedom of poise, which is aided by the massive, simple manner in which they are modelled, and they display a striking sense of mass and volume.

BADAMI CAVE

The Vaishnava cave at Badami is decorated with the earliest Brahminical paintings as Ajanta contains the earliest Buddhist paintings. The classical style of the Badami paintings clearly proves the continuation of the Vakataka tradition by the Chalukyas of Badami (See History: Dynasties). A large panel represents a scene in the palace, where the central seated figure is witnessing music and dance.

These few painted fragments at Badami dating back to 6th-8th century are the only existing material of early Chalukyan paintings.

ELLORA CAVES

Ellora is a small village near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. The caves at the south end are Buddhist, and those at the north end are Jaina. The majority of those lying between these two groups are Brahminical.

In the Ellora caves the Buddha is represented as attended by six, eight or ten Bodhisattvas, while Shaktis or Devis figure much more prominently on the walls of these caves. The Buddhist cave paintings evolved from a search for a life of peace and solitude while Shaiva rock temples are reflective of the search for a life of vigour and triumph. These cave sculptures are attributed to 758 AD.

The paintings in the group of caves at Ellora (8th century) cover the ceilings and walls of the mandapas (pavilions) and represent not only iconographic forms, but also floral designs with animals and

birds. The anatomy of figures, the details and ornamentation closely follow that of sculpture. The Jaina cave, Indra Sabha, has the entire ceiling and the wall covered with detailed painted scenes.

ELEPHANTA

The cave temple on Elephanta island off Bombay city is dedicated solely to Shiva and it was constructed in the mid 6th century by the Kalachuri king, Krishnaraja. Everything about Elephanta suggests a withdrawal from the everyday world. A cluster of myths surround the Elephanta sculptures. There are episodes of Shiva's life, of Kama, Agni, Ganesha, Parashurama, Bhrgu, Ila and Ravana (See Religion: Hinduism). In Elephanta the major emphasis was on the movement away from relief towards chamber-like environments. This synthesis of free-standing sculpture, shrine and wall was an important contribution to the history of art.

Manuscript Painting

The artist of the Pala period developed a vigorous and distinctive school of manuscript painting in Bengal and Bihar. *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita*, *Karandaryuba*, *Bodhicharya Vatrika* are some names of the manuscripts which contain a large number of coloured illustrations. Apart from Buddhist scenes, these manuscript paintings represent various gods and goddesses of the Mahayana pantheon (See Religion: Buddhism). Executed in red, white and black primary colours and in green, violet, light pink and grey secondary colours, they reveal marked tantrik influence.

ORISSA PALM LEAF

Almost all important villages in Orissa have palm leaf manuscripts. These manuscripts are illustrated with Vaishnava, Sakta, Kamasutra, Tantra, Shilpashastra and other themes. Orissan palm leaf illustrations are linear in style and are mainly of two types, simple engravings or illustrations in pure line. These illustrations are monochrome, mostly black or greyish. From the depiction of motifs one can also differentiate the work of a chitrakar or painter or a scribe. This style by the 11th and 12th century AD became an all-India feature in painting.

JAINA MANUSCRIPT

The earliest illustrated Jaina manuscript which, on palm leaf, contains two texts: *Ogha-Niryukti* and *Dasa-Vaikalika Tika* and dates back to 1060. The drawings are of a superior quality in these manuscripts. The use of paper for Jaina manuscripts dates back to the 14th century. One of the finest manuscripts is *Kalpa-Sutra-Kalacharya*. The illustrations are small against gold and silver background and Persian influences are obvious.

HOYSALA PALM LEAF MANUSCRIPT

There are specimens of paintings of the Hoysala period on palm leaf manuscripts comprising commentaries of Virasena of the original text of Satkhandagama. The paintings, on unusually large palm leaves, are important both for the beauty of the letters composing the text and the illustrations that accompany it. This manuscript is dated 1113 AD. Here Kali is presented as fair complexioned contrary to her description. Manuscript borders are done with great elegance. There is no repetition anywhere, though innumerable floral patterns have been painted in various leaves.

BENGAL MANUSCRIPT

Book illustrations found on wooden covers called the Pata as well as the palm leaf or paper folios inside are considered

brilliant examples of miniature paintings. The subjects were drawn from the life of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Toras, Pancharakshas, the Ashtasiddhis and other divinities from the tantrik tradition. Colours used are red, yellow and blue with an occasional green. The most remarkable illuminated paper manuscript of Bengal is a copy of Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* (1772).

PAINTED COVERS

Two Bengali Buddhist manuscripts, the *Kalachakratantra* and *Karandaryuba* (15th century), show the continuity of the eastern India style from the Pala and Sena period. The oldest painting of a wooden book cover (in Bengal) of a palmleaf manuscript of *Vishnu Purana* is dated 1499.

A great religious upsurge followed the advent of Chaitanya in the 15th century (See Sages and Saints). The whole country was convulsed with intense Bhakti cult reflected in the production of exquisitely painted colourful wooden manuscript covers. Manuscripts on *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Harivamsa*, *Krishnakirtan*, *Gita Govinda*, *Chaitanya Chaitanya Chaitanya* and others carry miniature paintings on book covers. It is said that these painted book covers were either influenced by the folk tradition or the Rajasthani miniature tradition (See Miniatures). These paintings generally are archaic in nature with strong primary colours.

Murals

THANJAVUR MURAL

The Brihadiwara temple at Thanjavur remains a great treasure of the art of the early (8th century) Chola period (See History: Dynasties). Contemporary classics describe the glory of the painting in the south, referring to Chitramandapas, Chitrasalas, Oviyanilayamas (picture halls) in temples and places. The entire wall space consists of a huge panel with Shiva, a gana (dwarf) and Vishnu playing the drum. The artists of this period were lavish in ornamentation.

VIJAYANAGARA MURAL

The Jaina mural paintings on the Sangita mandapa of the Vardhamana temple at Tirupparutikunram at Kanchipuram are noteworthy from the point of view of Jaina themes in Vijayanagara art. The themes chosen for these paintings are from the life of Vardhamana.

MATTANCHERI MURAL

The Mattancheri palace in Cochin was built by the Portuguese in 1557. The *Ramayana* series painted in the long room to the west of the coronation hall was executed during

the 16th-17th century. The paintings to the right of the coronation room are on Mahalakshmi, Kiritamurthi (coronation of Rama), Umamaheshwara, Vishnu, and so on. A religious fervour with predominant Vaishnavism impelled other such murals towards the end of the 18th century, which continued to the beginning of the 19th century. It is said that the first 'modern' Indian painter, Raja Ravi Varma was inspired by these murals.

SHEKHAWATI MURAL

Shekhawati in Rajasthan has empty forts of the Rajputs and the huge painted mansions of the merchant class. It bears the pictorial record of the customs, ritual, beliefs, mythology and history of the period which may be ascribed roughly to 1750.

It is said that the Shekhawati frescoes are similar to the Italian fresco technique which developed around the 14th century. The Italian *fresco buono* technique is known in Rajasthan as ala gila or arayish. Natural pigments like kajal, safeda or chuna, neel, harabhata, geru, hirmich, kesar were used. All these colours, normally preserved in a dry form were mixed into a paste and applied to the wet surface of the wall. The Shekhawati frescoes were influenced by Jaipur and Mughal School of painting.

The purpose of these frescoes was mainly decorative. Secular themes often depict Muslim subjects. This was an era of mythological frescoes, interspersed with illustrations of local legends, animals, portraits, hunting scenes and glimpses of everyday life.

Wood Carving

JAINA

Some of the intricate and charming wood-carvings which have survived the ravages of time are found in Gujarat and Rajasthan and belong mostly to a period ranging from the 17th to 19th century.

A Jaina house usually has either a Tirthankara image or Mangala-chinha (auspicious signs) carved on its door lintel or window. Other decorations on the frame include floral and creeper patterns, dwarapalas (gatekeepers) and so on.

The most notable aspect of Jaina art in this period is the intricate carving of the madal or bracket used on the door. The carriages include animals, birds, human figures and deities intermixed with intricate geometrical designs.

GUJARAT

Sculpture in wood goes back to early times. Even the earliest Buddhist Chaitya caves were wooden. An important school of

wood sculpture was in Patan, Gujarat, usually as part of temples, ghar dehras (miniature temples for household worship) and private buildings. Much of it is religious in significance and depicts the deities of the Jaina pantheon and the legends and stories related to Jainism.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

The tradition of wood carving in Himachal Pradesh existed even in ancient times. The early wood-carved temples which have survived are stylistically similar to that of the Gupta period. The important local centres of wood carving are Chamba, Kulu, Kinnaur and Shimla hills. Carved door and window frames, facades, balconies of temples, palaces and houses, carved panels, brackets and pillars are all reminiscent of wood carving. Besides architectural carvings there are also carvings of figures of gods and goddesses. The most beautiful are those of local deities, housed in village temples and wooden masks used for ritual dances.

Glass Painting

SAURASHTRA AND KUTCH

Glass paintings emerged at the beginning of the 18th century in Gujarat. Several identical sets of this particular style of this reverse painting on glass are found all over Saurashtra and Kutch. It is assumed that these paintings were introduced by Chinese artists, who probably migrated to Gujarat after the fall of Srirangapatnam. Inspired by the Chinese painters, the folk painters of Saurashtra and Kutch adopted the new surface as a trend. With the passage of time the local artists developed their own style. Though the tradition could not achieve any great aesthetic height, it was an important minor art of the period.

TANJORE PAINTING

Pictures painted on glass sheets and framed with the unpainted side uppermost, came into vogue sometime by the end of 18th century and became popular in the 19th century. The Thanjavur style is clearly related to the Thanjavur icon paintings on wood. The figures are heavy and bold. The outlines are strong, the drawing stylised and edged in black. Gold and metal foil are used to simulate ornaments and gems. Glass paintings are also found in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Saurashtra, Kutch, Rajasthan.

MAHARASHTRA

The glass paintings of Maharashtra fall more or less into two categories. Those done for the court are slick and highly finished. The usual subjects are portraits of

the members of the court or of the mistresses of the Peshwas. Some portraits are equestrian. The style is also related to Maratha miniature painting though there are western influences in the manner of presentation, colour and plasticity. The second style is indigenous and related to the Andhra style. Besides the usual depiction of the deities there are secular subjects painted in lively colours. Indigenous pictures of the deities are conventional and small in size. They are similar to the Maratha line and colour pictures.

BIHAR AND BENGAL

Glass painting seem to have been prolific in Bihar. There are complex paintings of great detail and simple ones undecorated and notable for their clarity like a single motif against a bare background. The colours are very restrained, brown and black against a silver ground. Some pictures of the deities are quite large.

The Bengal glass 'paintings' were hung in homes and also in 'thakurghars' or puja rooms. Sometimes they decorated the puja mandap during the Durgapuja festival. The style can be identified by the distinctive type of figures and the costume. The colours are muted pastel shades.

Wall Painting

PUNJAB

The wall paintings of Punjab cover a considerable range of themes. The subject matter and the art forms were derived from myths, metaphysics and contemporary themes. Some religious themes are based on the *Markandeya Purana*, devoted to Shakti as the mother goddess. Her slaying of the buffalo-demon Mahisasura, finds impressive treatment in the Sheesh Mahal fresco at Patiala. Youthful gopis, headed by Radha made another popular subject. Most of these paintings stem from the *Bhagavata Purana*. Amorous tales popular in Punjab including themes drawn from bardic lore also figure on these murals.

UTTAR PRADESH

On the walls of numerous temples in Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi and its outskirts), dhamshalas (charitable hostels) and akharas (wrestling schools) and even in humble homes there are paintings which look like huge prints, composed in bold lines and filled with vivid colours. Paintings are executed on walls to mark a 'mundan' ceremony, a marriage or an important social celebration. The painters are the 'kumbhars' – potters who used to make images and painted pottery. Their preference is always for bright colours. A preliminary sketch in base outline is sometimes drawn

with chalk. There are floral patterns, birds and animals; soldiers and even national leaders appear in the paintings. There are minor variations in style according to the social status of the patron and the locality of his residence.

Folk

India is well-known for a deep rooted folk tradition which offers rich and significant forms. Folk art is still alive because of India's social organisation which is based on the village community. Art in the villages was conditioned by craft objects used in rituals connected with rural life. Folk designs and forms are found in various shapes like the sun, the moon, a comb, dots, circles, waves, stars, a tree, a hill or a river. The colours used are mostly red and ochre together with black and white which produce a monochrome effect.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PAINTING

Painting in Himachal Pradesh is often regarded as an offshoot of the art that developed on the plains, but a local tradition of fresco painting already existed. With the disintegration of Mughal rule, artists began to settle wherever they got some patronage for their art. Apart from the Pahari miniaturists, there were local artists who painted for the delight of the common people. The Kulu valley developed a folk style in which the colouring was simple and soft, contrasts few. Mandi too had a story folk tradition. The artists took their inspiration from Hindu epics, religious legends as well as popular folk stories. These paintings are inspired by the sub-Himalayan and romantic landscape.

HIMACHAL PRADESH METAL WORK

The large number of bronzes seen in Himachal Pradesh bear witness to the remarkable maturity of this indigenous style. Generally they are small in size varying from 1 cm to 25 cms; only few are in bigger size. They are strong and well-modelled and are both three dimensional and two dimensional. The most typical are the masks which draw their inspiration from the folk tradition. There are also solid cast bronze idols. These medieval sculptures have a primitive force and simplicity of expression in their depiction of the Hindu pantheon. The Himachal artists also made silver umbrellas, temple utensils, lamps and musical instruments.

SARAS

Saras folk paintings of Bengal were generally done by potters assisted by the women. On each Saras there is invariably a representation of Lakshmi, the goddess of

wealth, plenty and harvest.

The colour scheme in the Saras, 25 to 40 cm in diameter is made up of yellow, red, blue and dark green. The rings round the rim and bands in the middle are in alternate sweeps of red, blue and black. Saras are often used as wall decoration in the homes of rural Bengal.

ASSAM

The Malakars and Solakars of Assam paint gods and goddesses from the Hindu pantheon and characters from religious legends. 'Manasa Mangal' is a favourite theme. Manasa is the deity of the snakes (See Religion: Hinduism - Concepts). The lines are bold and the colours used on pith soak into the surface to give it an overall soft tone.

RAJASTHAN

The tradition of folk paintings on cloth largely known traditionally as 'Phad' painting is the popular style patronised by the rural folk of Rajasthan. It depicts the glory of their folk heroes like Pabuji, Devnarayanji and Ramdevji who are worshipped as folk deities.

The Phad painter prefers khadi or reja (hand-spun and hand-woven coarse cloth), as the canvas for his rectangular scroll paintings. The primer or kalap is prepared either out of the flour of coarse wheat or barley which is mixed with water and gum. The traditional Phad painter paints the narrative sung by the bhopa or bard, generally accompanied by his patron or yajman. The composition correlates the narrative moment of the folk epic sung by the bhopa.

PRATISTHANA

Paithan, now an obscure township in Marathwada, was once 'Pratisthana' – a pilgrim centre and the imperial capital of the Satavahanas who ruled in the Post Mauryan period until the end of 2nd century AD (See History: Dynasties). Paithan in the 17th century was also the home of a peculiar folk style of painting with remarkable originality and bold brushwork. The paintings very likely originated as mementos for pilgrims returning home from Paithan just as it was in Kalighat (Calcutta). The style is a fusion of the art of the miniaturist with that of the temple muralist and the angularities of the drawing indicate a kinship with Ellora. Subjects treated were from Hindu religious legends and the epics or otherwise from the ordinary day to day village life.

SANTHALI AND SAORA

Painting is not common among the tribal people of India, but the Santhals, who live in the forests/villages of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the Saoras, who live in the hills



Phad

of Koraput and Ganjam, build their houses with thick mud walls, which provide a canvas for some remarkable wall paintings. The Santhal paintings reflect their natural vivacity. Santhali art is simplistic in vision – it is art in its most elementary form replete with vitality and is always done by women.

While the Santhals work on a white background, the Saoras work on walls washed with red clay, in paints made of white rice powder and black ash. The pictures are made in honour of the dead to avert disease and to celebrate certain festivals. They are specially important as records of Saora dreams, their hopes and fears and the dramatisation of their theological beliefs.

Terracotta

The most ancient and original form of expression of plastic art was through the medium of terracotta. Terracotta figurines in India, ranging over a period of 3,000 years, belong to times both before and after the use of stone in sculpture. The earliest examples of terracotta go back to Mohenjodaro and Harappa (2000 BC). Though it is fragile and disintegrates quickly, a continuous stream of art throughout the different stages of civilisation can still be found.

BENGAL

The large expanse of temple terracottas in Bengal offer an endless variety of forms and expression. Bengal has used bricks to build temples because of scarcity of stone. These temple terracottas executed in shallow relief reveal a comprehensiveness and

linear grace characteristic of mural paintings. In most cases subjects are accommodated in well-defined frames, square or rectangular in shape and arranged vertically or horizontally upon the temple walls. Some of the famous terracotta temples are in Birbhum and Bishnupur districts.

Tribal Art

DOKRA

Dokra casting derives its name from the semi-tribal nomadic blacksmith craftsmen who use the technique known as Dokra kamars. Their favourite areas are Bastar in Madhya Pradesh and in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

These artists use the rare wax process which was common in India 5,000 years ago. Dokra artists produce a large variety of articles of outstanding artistic value, especially images of gods and goddesses or accessories of utility and decoration.

RATHVAS

A part of Chhota Udaipur of the Baroda district is locally known as Rath and the name Rathva is most probably derived from the name of the region. Rathva paintings mostly pertain to myths of creation, the cult of the great deities whose themes related to ghosts, ancestors and events of this world. These are painted on the walls of the Rathva houses. Pithoro's marriage with Pithori is one of the most popular recited and painted legend. The sun and the moon (compared with Rama and Lakshman), play a significant role in the creation of myths of the Rathvas. Red,



Ganjifa cards of Orissa

green, blue, yellow and orange are the main colours used in the paintings. Brushes of different sizes are made from pieces of green bamboo stem of varying thickness.

WARLI

Warli paintings made by the Warli tribals of Thane district in Maharashtra are strangely ascetic. The art of the Warlis is part of a ritual tradition highlighting the marriage ceremony. The paintings do not consist of primary colours as is often the case with folk art of India. Instead they paint on an austere brown surface with the use of only one colour – white. They are remarkable in their intensely social nature. They look outwards, capturing the life around. Men, animals and trees form a loose, rhythmic pattern across the entire sheet. Paintings are made on paper and on walls. The cohesive element in Warli painting is space. In most Warli paintings a number of events take place simultaneously.

Ganjifa

DASHAVATARA TASH

The Dashavatara playing cards of Bishnupur (Bengal) are believed to have been invented by Raja Malla of Bishnupur around 1695. Some scholars believe that the game of Ganjifa originated in central Asia and it was introduced in India from the court of Timur in Samarkand. Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty first introduced Ganjifa in India. There were two types of Ganjifa, one with 12 sets and 144 cards, the other 8 sets with 96 cards. The later games are known as Mughal Ganjifa. The ten avatars (incarnations) of Vishnu as well as their respective symbols are depicted in the Dashavatara Tash. The cards are circular, with heavily painted colours and are richly decorated. But the Bishnupur cards are stylistically different from the Ganjifa of Orissa. In the Orissa cards, bright yellow figures are portrayed against a flashing scarlet background.

GANJAPA

Ganjapa is a round playing card. In Orissa Ganjapas are executed on rounds specially cut out for this purpose. Ganjapa is also known as Ganjifa. The themes of the Ganjifas vary from ordinary decorative motifs known as Harapha (symbols) to figurative representation of the Dashavatara, and *Ramayana*. Although Ganjifa is a secular game, the figures of several gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are painted as Haraphas. The themes differ from region to region. For example, Puri is known for Dashavatara cards, Ganjam for Ashtamalla and *Ramayana* cards and Athrangi is popular throughout Orissa. According to the number of colours used for sets, the pack is called Athrangi (eight colours), Vararangi (12 colours), Dasrangi (10 colours). Ganjifa cards come arranged in sets, in packs of different numbers, such as 96, 120 or 144 cards. Thus a pack of 96 cards may have eight sets of different cards, each set having 12 cards of the same colour.

Pata

Scroll painting and panel painting existed some 5,000 years ago. Gosala Mankhalipulta, a contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira in the 6th century BC, was himself a son of a Patua or folk artist. Ashtadhyayi of Panini of the 4th century BC clearly states the existence of the two types of artists: gramshilpi and rajshilpi. It is the gramshilpi who are called folk artists today and they expressed themselves through Pata painting. Buddha admired a painting called 'charana-chitta' in which one picture goes below the other. In the 8th century Banabhatta referred to the 'Pattikara' or artist who speaking about Yama, also sings before the audience unrolling the scroll or the Pata called Yamapata. Similarly there are Jadupatas generally painted by tribals like the Santhals, Bhumijas and Bediyas (See People: Tribes). Patas use primary colours such as white, red, indigo, yellow and black

prepared from mineral and vegetable colours and mix them with the paste of boiled tamarind seeds.

KALIGHAT

According to some art historians, Kalighat painting came into existence around 1820. This particular school of painting emerged due to the disintegration of the self-sufficient rural system as a consequence of British rule in India. A large number of village 'patuas' migrated to Calcutta in search of a new patron. They settled down near the Kalighat temple.

The original Pata paintings are mostly painted on cloth. Paper came to be used much later.

Kalighat Pats were religious, mythical as well as secular in character. Stories from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other legends were painted along with contemporary themes and events. Some were satirical in nature. The bold and sweeping brushstrokes with shading are the chief characteristics of this school.

JARANO CHAKSHUDANA

Scroll paintings known as Jaranopata were carried by the painters to be unrolled before a village audience. Chakshudana Pata was used for ritual and magical purposes. The themes for these paintings were taken from *Krishnalila*, *Ramayana*, and *Behula Kabini*. Colours used were red, blue and yellow with an occasional dash of green, white, pink and ochre of various shades. Black was used for the construction of lines and the flat background was often filled with a flat red colour of subtle intensity.

CHALACHITRA

Closely allied to the art of the Patua was the painted Chalachitra which adorned the upper part of the images of Durga made for worship in Bengal. The Chalachitras are semi-circular in shape. A continuous panel is divided into two parts by a monumental figure of Shiva seated at the top centre. The painted Chalachitra design bears close similarity to the Pata style of painting.

JADUPATA

The Jadupatas are a small community comparable in social status to potters, barbers, blacksmiths and sweetmeat makers in Bihar. Allied to the Patuas of Bengal, they were confined to the Santhal Parganas and spoke a dialect of Bengali and Santhali. Themes are varied and include the creation myth of the Santhals, a tiger or leopard, or the adventures of Krishna. Despite the limited colours and materials, Jadupata scrolls show a great variety of idioms and treatment.

ORISSA

In the context of Orissa Pata the word 'pata' (derived from Sanskrit 'patta') has a special meaning since it refers to cloth in early texts. Patachitra is done on pati, a special type of handmade canvas prepared by pasting together layers of cloth. Vaishnava Patas overshadow Sakta and other Patas in sheer numbers. Unlike the Kalighat paintings which were secular in nature, these Pata paintings (Vaishnava and Jagannatha) have so far adhered to only religious sentiments and depict topics related to Krishnalila and Jagannatha.

GARODA SCROLLS

Garodas belong to a community of folk artists living in the region of northern Gujarat and Rajasthan. The painted scrolls of Garodas are about 35 cm broad and more than 4 m long. They are usually divided into nine compartments by thick black horizontal lines.

NAKASHI SCROLL

Folk paintings in Telangana are called Nakashi. These painters also produced the mythological paintings to meet the needs of all communities of the villages and towns of their region. Such paintings are unrolled to music along with the story-teller's narration. It tells the origin of their caste, their development and existence of their home deity (kula devata) in sessions that last a week. The story is normally painted in 40 or 50 parts, in vigorous and sensitive colours to attract the common folk.

CHITRAKATHI

The Chitrakathi is a community of migrating story-tellers found all over Maharashtra. They used a series of single sheet paintings for their story-telling sessions. These paintings are done on paper 40 cm by 30 cm in horizontal format. About 20 or more single paintings illustrate one legend or story. All leaves belonging to one story are kept together in a bundle called pothi. The themes from Chitrakatha paintings range from local legend to the well-known epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and so on. Although there are variations of style depending on the region they came from, for example, Pinguli, Sawantwadi, and so on, the use of brownish mineral colours is rather prominent.

PURI

The earliest pictures which may be dated to about 1800 or earlier were painted on cloth in earth colours – rich Indian reds, dull blues, soft greens and rich yellow. The Puri temple has the reputation of being non-sectarian – a place where Shiva and Vishnu were equally worshipped. The images



Pabari Miniature

here exude a supernatural aura. The rejection of naturalistic details is contrary to Hindu images. Both paper and cloth are used in Puri paintings. Colours are indigenous and bright.

OSHA KOTHI

The chitrakars who make these paintings on walls and on 'Pata' belong to the artisan castes and have the titles of Maharana or Mahapatra. Mali (gardner), Odia (farmers), Motchi (cobbler) castes also make wall paintings. These are known as Oshakothi paintings. The basic theme of these paintings is of the deity Shakti preferably her benign aspect Mangala (See Orissa Pata).

Chitrakars also make paintings on cloth directly without giving a primary coating to the cloth. These artists take stories from *Ramayana* and other epics for depiction.

Miniature

In the Indian context it actually means medium-sized, portfolio painting. In technique and treatment, the Indian miniature has almost the same characteristics as wall painting, cloth painting or manuscript illustration. Specific later examples of manuscript paintings in the early 16th century paved the way for the evolution of the early

schools of miniature painting like the Rajasthani and Mughal Schools.

CHAURAPANCHSIKA

Lit. fifty songs of a thief, a book of verse by Bilhana of Kashmir, c. 11th - 12th century. This was the culmination of the manuscript illustrations and the forerunner of the earliest schools of the miniature painting. This essentially amorous series is richly illustrated by full-page miniatures. The later flowering of this style is shown in the *Bhagavata* episodes and the *Gita Govinda* folios, found in the Prince of Wales Museum today in Bombay.

SCHOOLS OF RAJASTHANI PAINTING

Early 17th century onwards we get examples of the Rajasthani Schools which were revived after frequent contact with Mughal courts. These paintings reflect the synthesised Rajput-Mughal milieu. The paintings are traditional pictorial expressions with accentuated forms, bold colours and ornamental depictions of nature corresponding to the Rajput ethos. In many respects these schools of painting were similar to the Chaurapanchasika style.

JODHPUR AND BIKANER

This comprises the western desert region of Rajasthan, the homeland of the Rathods.

Bikaner was ruled by a junior off-shoot of the parent house of Jodhpur. Early examples of Jodhpur paintings are lost but the Bikaneri paintings, executed around 1600, show a heavy Mughal influence and yet this school revitalised the Mughal School tradition by making it more expressive. Painters like Ruknuddin and Nuruddin mastered the Bikaneri style and introduced to it delicate human and vegetal forms in subtle colour tones. There was a revival of the Rathod trends in the Jodhpur style in the second half of the 18th century. In the 19th century the Jodhpur School acquired a patron in Man Singh II and expressions in miniature gained in tone and colour.

MEWAR

The school presents an uninterrupted progression of painting from the beginning of the 17th century to the end of the 19th century. It is characterised by strong colours and decorative designs. Its themes were traditional Sanskrit or Brajhasha texts like *Ragamala*, *Krishnalila*, *Nayika Bheda*. In all cases, amorous scenes have been freely depicted. Illustrations from the two great epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* also form part of the repertoire. Mewari painting took a new turn during Amar Singh's II's patronage (1699-1711). Court and harem scenes present newer settings, stronger colours and elemental borrowings from the Mughal School are blended with the local richness.

BUNDI-KOTA

This school arose as a result of continuous contact with the Mughals and presents a fine blending of the two traditions. The human figures have a haunting presence although the faces are somewhat fleshy and ruddy. Traditional text illustrations like the *Ragamala* and *Rasikapriya* are the most favoured themes for painting. Like all other schools of Indian painting the Bundi-Kota School too had a series on hunting of which at least 1700 are in existence. The twin style began to decline towards the end of the 18th century.

MALWA

The school is closest to the Mewar School in style. It has a relatively short history (1630-1700) and there is a marked deterioration in quality towards the end. The style began traditionally and shows some innovation in its series on the *Ramayana* (c. 1640). The Malwa School has also borrowed heavily from the Mughal style and has blended it with traditional decorative forms.

MUGHAL SCHOOL

Art of all kinds flourished in the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), though it was his father

Humayun who first invited Persian miniaturists to India. Painters drawn from traditional art centres of India evolved a composite style, weaving together Persian and Indian elements. The school had its foundation in the illustrations of the *Hamzanama*, which recounted the exploits of Amir Hamza, uncle of the Prophet Mohammed in large albums called *Muraqqas*. Later the school incorporated Hindu mythology like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Harivamsa* which were first translated into Persian and then profusely illustrated. Some of the best known painters of this period were Basawan, Kesho, Miskin, Lal and Dharam Das (Mukund) (See History: Dynasties; Religion: Islam).

JEHANGIR

The Mughal School took a new turn with Jehangir's reign (1605-1627). Although still influenced by Persian traditions, Jehangir's keen observation of nature and his eye for detail are reflected in this school. The paintings progress with the emperor, based on his autobiography *Tuzuk-e-Jehangir*. The paintings are also known for the depiction of natural history. Bird and animal paintings were superbly executed by the emperor's favourite painter, Mansur, on whom was bestowed the title, Nadir-ul-Asr or wonder of creation. Individual portraits of women in amorous settings or with exotic backdrops also began to figure in miniature with this school.

KISHANGARH

Since the relatively small kingdom of Kishangarh was ruled by a branch of the Rathods, it shared some of the qualities of the parent style of Jodhpur. A more advanced style of the painting emerged in this centre at the beginning of the 18th century under the patronage of prince Sawant Singh who gave new impetus to the school. Some of the scenes are like embroidered versions of the later Mughal paintings but are projected with greater creativity and a sense of joy.

DECCAN

Around the same time when the Rajasthani and Mughal Schools were flourishing, the Islamic Deccani Sultanates were equally active and each one of their local styles were comparable to the ones of the north. The main centres of painting were Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar which were greatly influenced by the Mughal style. In the 17th century, as each one of these dynasties faced the onslaught of the Mughals and succumbed, their distinct character crumbled. Therefore, while in the latter half of the 16th century we find a

strange mixture of Hindu and Mughal tradition and after the Mughals captured the Deccan, a mixed Golconda and Mughal style arose in the Hyderabad region. The style finally reached the Maratha courts with all its acquired variations.

PAHARI

The Pahari Schools in the western Himalayas already had a rooted tradition when a revival took a place at Basohli and other centres which followed the Rajasthani Schools. The style had attained great maturity by 1675 when the landmark paintings on *Rasamanjari*, a text on old love themes was produced. The style was highly decorative in style, imbuing human figures, landscape and all other elements with great strength and colour. There is some extension of this style at Mankot with minor variations. *Raagamalas*, *Krishnalilas* and episodes from the *Ramayana* were all painted one after the other. The final phase of the movement saw the series based on the *Gita Govinda* where Jayadeva's immortal songs are most tenderly portrayed. Late Kangra paintings (c. 1810) while losing out on subtle human expressions show a revival of lush landscapes. The best examples of this are the *Rasikapriya* and *Gita Govinda* illustrations.

MURSHIDABAD SCHOOL

The school of miniature painting in Murshidabad developed around the 18th century. The unsettled conditions of the Mughal metropolis and lessening of patronage forced the Mughal court artists to settle in and around the new flourishing trade centres under the British. One such centre was Murshidabad in Bengal.

This school was somewhat stylised, replacing the tender animation of early Mughal painting. The most typical examples of Murshidabad miniatures are separate pictures with a variety of subjects but mainly portraits of the viceroys, nobles and other officials. Some are manuscripts (illustrated), like *Qaswini* and a Persian translation of the Nala-Damayanti story (See Myths and Legends). The Murshidabad paintings also depict river scenes usually with buildings on the bank. Vermilion, blue, gray and orange are used to indicate the horizon, clouds and water.

DESIGN

Embroidery

ABHALA

Mirror inset embroidery of Gujarat. Designs are composed by fixing rows or clusters of small mirrors on cloth with closely worked silk threads. The colours are very rich and bring out the reflective nature of the mirrors. The motifs are generally flowers and creepers. It is gaining great popularity as table linen: at a candle light dinner, the myriad images thrown up by the mirrors create a magical effect.

APPLIQUE

Known to have started in India sometime in the 11th century, this craft is a part of every ritual and festival, particularly in the temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri. Applique of great artistic merit is also seen in some areas of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu in the form of wall painting, furnishing fabrics, garden umbrellas and dress material.

The applique of Gujarat has pieces of cloth, both coloured and patterned, finely cut in sizes and shapes to form motifs and stitched together on a plain background to form a composite piece. In Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) women make ralli (applique work) by stitching different coloured pieces of cloth into a decorative pattern. Applique in Bengal is bolder and meant for large spreads like shamianas (decorative canopy) and banners. Thin ribbon pieces of red cloth are stitched on to white material. The applique of Bihar is made for both commercial and personal use. More imagination and innovation may be seen in the small, personal items where, in a technique called 'katwa,' a complete piece of cloth is cut into different patterns and the entire composition is stitched on to another cloth. For canopies, tents and walls, traditional designs of trees, flowers, animals and birds are stitched on to dark red or orange backgrounds. The applique of Pipli in Orissa is famous for the intricacy of design. Small patterns are cut out and sewn on to larger material to form designs. Thanjavur's (Tamil Nadu) unique applique is used in temple chariot decorations. The motifs are religious with images of Kartikeya, Ganesha, Shiva-Parvati and so on. To heighten the effect, pieces of felt in muted colours are used along with strong, dark shades.

ARIBHARAT

This unique embroidery of Kutch derives its name from ari, a hook, which is plied from the top, fed by thread from below with the material tightly spread on the frame. It is



Applique

also popularly known as mochi (cobbler) stitch after the original use of the stitch on leather.

BEADWORK

Saurashtra and Kutch are known for their beadwork and for designs they lean heavily on bandhini (See Hand Printing) patterns. On white material, uniform-sized beads are used to work out motifs and designs. Apart from embroidery, beads are also used to decorate domestic animals, torans (doorway embellishments), cradles, pouches for water jugs, and purses.

CHAMBA

Chamba embroidery is amongst the liveliest in the country. The best-known is the rumal (handkerchief), a large cream coloured scarf with big motifs of trees and flowers and the Raslila (See Performing Arts: Dance).

CHIKAN

An extremely popular design of Lucknow, the chikan, a very subtle and delicate stitch, done conventionally in white thread and on white material, appears like shadowed lace. The charm of these stitches lies in their miniature size and incredible evenness.

CROCHET

Lace-making as an art has existed for almost 400 years in India, with the most popular

centre being Jamnagar in Gujarat. The best example of crochet here is the conical hat. Kerala is also known for its crochet with individual designs of coconut trees, elephants and bamboos. Crochet lace developed extensively down the Godavari delta. Even today women in a hundred villages of the district are engaged in it.

KANTHA

The embroidery of Bengal, the very word kantha, means 'patched cloth.' It is made of discarded sarees and dhotis piled up according to size and thickness, depending on the desired type of kantha. The pieces are sewn together using darning stitch and white thread to cover the entire surface. The threads are so closely drawn together across the surface in one direction that the edges become imperceptible and seem like ripples. Coloured threads for embroidery are taken from the coloured borders of the saris used in the kantha. The most skilful kantha embroidery is do-rookha (double faced) where the stitching is so immaculate as to appear the same on both sides. Kanthas are used primarily as sheets, quilts and wrap-arounds for newborn babies.

KASHIDA

In Bihar women use Kashida on their own and children's garments. The chain stitch they use is called jhinkana because of the slight sound of the needle when it is pulled through the cloth. Designs are drawn freely from the world around—jewellery, nature, and so on.

KASIDA

The incomparable scenic beauty of Kashmir seems to be reflected in its embroidery, which looks gorgeous despite the simplicity of the stitches. Kasida is worked in several forms. Zalakdozi is a chain stitch, done with a hook for long flowing designs on shawls and floor coverings. Suzni is for only superior material; vata chikan, a button hole stitch, is used for fillers and do-rookha is for double-sided work. Jali (lacy trellis pattern) is used for the exquisite Jamevar or Kani shawls and special crewel work is done on thick furnishing material.

KASUTI

This embroidery of Karnataka is especially designed for the sari and blouse. The kasuti has some special stitches; the gavanti is a double running stitch, and the murgi is a zigzag within the darning stitch. The designs are so laid out in the sari that the larger ones are closer to the pallu. Patterns include an elaborate platform for the Tulsi plant, a temple chariot, and a palanquin with the bride.

KATHI

Named after the Kathi nomads, this embroidery is also known as Heer. The nomads drew their themes from romances, legends, and religion. Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity is often embroidered into little squares called sthapanas.

In Gujarat, embroidery is used for decoration of the entire house almost like a ritual. The designs are often embossed with mirrors. Colourfully patterned torans are hung over panels as a good omen and square embroidered pieces called chaklas cover the furniture.

MAHAJAN

Embroidery of Saurashtra, that gets its effects with special manipulation of the satin and herringbone stitches to which is added an interplay of glowing red and shades of violet. The borders may be triangular, crested with peacock feet, followed by a double series of mirrors.

MANIPUR

The Meities, oldest inhabitants of Manipur, have their own traditional designs for which they draw on intriguing legends especially that of Khamba-Thoibi (See Performing Arts: Dance – Manipuri). The best known is the work done on their phaneyk, a lungi (See Adornment: Costumes) worn by the women. A simple pattern, Tindgobi, is done in satin stitch. A circular design called Akyobi or Akoybi, is also popular. Naga shawls depict animals on a black background.

METAL WIRE

Embroidery done in zari or kalabattu is in a class by itself in India. Real zari threads were spun out of silver. Today, however, with the increasing cost of silver, it has been replaced by synthetic material. While the traditional zari centres were Varanasi and Kanchipuram (more for weaving), Surat in Gujarat is now an important centre for synthetic zari. Wire apart, metal is used in other forms in embroidery like gijal – a circular, stiff wire; sitara (star) – a small metal disk; tikora – twisted metal thread.

Zardosi is a heavier gold embroidery carried out on heavy coats, cushions and furnishing. Kamdani, a lighter needlework is done on lighter material, mostly on woven cloth. Other important zari centres are Kashmir, Delhi, Agra, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad.

PHULKARI

The Phulkari of Punjab and Haryana has stylised floral designs as the very name indicates (phul – flower, kari – work). But the stitching itself is very simple, involving

darning from the back either by counting the threads or with the help of a threadline done with great care, for a single miss can distort a whole pattern. In the 'Bagh phulkari' (garden theme), the designs are more intricately woven with variations like Shalimar Bagh, Chand Bagh, Duniya Bagh, Satranga (seven colours) and Panchranga (five colours).

In 'Chope,' the edges of the material are embroidered with motifs of flowers, fruit and birds. The best Phulkari is to be found in Gurgaon, Karnal, Rohtak, Hissar, all in Haryana and around Delhi.

PICHWAI

Of the wealth of embroidery in Rajasthan, the best known is the pichwai, a richly embroidered cloth which grew around the Srinathji or Krishna temple (See Holy Places: Temple). The designs depict Srinathji in dark blue, surrounded by his playmates. While the outline is in black, the surface is in bright colours. Gold is sometimes used to heighten the effect.

Pichwais today are understood to mean miniatures painted on cloth in colours made from vegetable dyes.

SUJNI

Quilts of Bihar, made of old saris sewn together with tiny running stitches in white threads drawn from fabrics. Designs like flying kites, swans gliding on water and birds on tree tops are bold and striking. The Sujni is generally used for wrapping musical instruments, books and other valuables. It is similar to the 'Katha' (See Katha).

Floor Design

There are regions in India where decorating the floor, especially the entrance and the prayer or puja room is a daily ritual, considered auspicious. Often there are different motifs for different days of the week and elaborate designs for ceremonial occasions. Rice paste or dry powder, wheat flour, earth and vegetable dyes are used. Usually the fingertips serve as brush but at times thin sticks bound at the tips with cotton or a rag are also used. There are basic and symbolic designs common to the whole country. Many of these are geometric (See Festivals; Religion: Hinduism – Ceremonies and Rituals).

AIPANA

A local adaptation of the alpana, the floor design of Bengal. The women of Himachal Pradesh and of the Kumaon region use rice paste and work with their fingers to create pictorial motifs of the sun, trees, figures, peacocks – symbolic of an association with the immediate surroundings.

ALPANA

Similar to jhonti of Orissa, the alpana of Bengal and Assam is highly decorative and uses both geometrical and floral designs. Conch shells, fish, serpents and flowers are popular motifs. The designs are drawn on the floor with chalk powder and filled either with the same white chalk or coloured with alta (red), turmeric (yellow) or ink for blue. Bengal gram, wheat, sago and rice paste are also used. It is customary to place a flower before each alpana design.

ANIYALS

Homes and temples in Kerala are decorated with Aniyals particularly during Onam (See Festivals). Designs called poovu kolam (flower design) are made at the entrance with motifs like a central flower bed, coconut trees and coloured powder to highlight the edges.

CHOWKI

Lit. 'seat of Lakshmi,' goddess of wealth and fortune. This pattern made during Deepavali also has two interlaced triangles for the deity of knowledge and learning, Saraswati. The design is done in lotus motifs with the footprints of Lakshmi on the outer circle (See Festivals: Deepavali).

Saraswati also has her own chowki – a dot signifying the Absolute with a number of concentric circles to depict growth and expansion.

Durga (goddess of strength) has a central design drawn with intricate swastikas, outlined with nine dots placed vertically and horizontally to signify the nine names and the nine days she is worshipped on at the time of Navaratri or Dussehra (See Festivals).

KOLAM

Floor design of south India differs from those of Bengal and Orissa by being formalised and geometrical. The designs are sketches, with only the outlines done either with rice powder on freshly wet cowdung-smeared ground or with rice paste on smooth floors. In most popular kolams, the lines are drawn across dots with the right hand ring finger which holds a piece of cloth dipped in the paste. The geometric kolams are highly symbolic. All the zodiacal signs are used. For Tulasi puja the 'Tulasi mandapam' or platform is drawn; for the harvest festival, Pongal, the patterns depict the cooking pot (See Festivals); on Fridays 'hridayakamalam', a lotus motif, is regarded auspicious as an emblem of 'Sri,' the goddess of Fortune. Similarly there are kolams especially designed for death anniversaries and rituals (See Religion: Hinduism – Rituals).



Kolam in the making

MADHUBANI

This village in the Darbhanga district of Bihar is known for its traditional folk art and handicraft (See Paintings and Sculpture). Their floor designs comprise geometrical and highly stylised figures. Lakshmi's feet are drawn at the entrance indicating her welcome into the house at all times.

MANDANA

Similar to the popular rangoli (See Rangoli) of Gujarat and Rajasthan, mandana of Madhya Pradesh uses specific designs for certain festivals. On a new moon night the mandana features several stylised fruits in ochre and white lines with an olive background to depict fecundity. During Holi, triangular patterns are made of the drum with a central red dot (bindu), sacred to the deity. Motifs of the sun, moon and Navagrahas (nine planetary deities) are also made (See Religion: Hinduism – Lesser Deities, Cosmos: Astrology).

MUGGU

The traditional floor design of Andhra Pradesh. Each day of the week has a set symbol and the design is built around it. Shivapeeth for Monday, Kalipeeth (Tuesday), Swastika (Wednesday), Lakshmi (Friday), and so on. The symbol 'Sri' (a motif for Lakshmi) is often seen.

PEETHA

This is the seat of Shiva and consists of concentric squares or circles with a cross to form the centre towards which four pathways lead from four corners. The largest square is the altar and the lines represent

the steps. On either side a zigzag border stands for the ocean.

Textile

HAND-PAINTED FABRICS

Besides complicated weaves, hand painting cloth is one of the many ways of ornamenting textiles. Cloth painting took different forms in different regions and each attained its own distinction. Sadly, what we have left today are just remnants of the rich heritage of fabric painting.

The earliest of these was the temple cloth, probably the successor to the illustrations on palm leaves. The art grew around pilgrimage centres where it could get both patronage and buyers. In the temple cloth of Nathdwara in Rajasthan the tempera technique was developed under the Vaishnava influence. Kalahasti in Andhra Pradesh is known for its Kalamkari (kalam – pen) painted cloth. Here vegetable dyes of rich shades are used for strong outlines in brown and black to produce a bold and striking effect. The paintings are done in panels, each depicting a story from the epics. The temple cloth of Chikkanaikanpetta in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu is called Vasa Malai. It resembles the Kalamkari, only here, chemicals are used instead of vegetable dyes.

In western India, cloth painting of deities is called Pichwai. It developed around the Srinathji, the Krishna temple at Nathdwara (See Holy Places: Temples). The painting is done on a rough handspun and handwoven cloth after it is starched. The outline is worked in contrasting col-

ours on the prepared background. Though the figure of Srinathji is always recognisable, the composition differs from picture to picture.

Orissa's Patachitra or Pat as it is called, is done on thinly woven material. This is coated with chalk paste, gum and tamarind seed which gives it a leathery finish. For large paintings, often three layers of cloth are gummed together. Lord Jagannatha, the deity of Puri, figures largely in the Patachitra. In West Bengal the Pat painters are called patidars (See Painting and Sculpture).

Batik is the Javanese word for wax painting. It is believed that this craft went from the Coromandel coast to south-east Asia which in time developed its own designs and technique and came to be known as an Indonesian art. It later returned to India and was revived at Santiniketan. Today it is popular all over the country.

Bandhini, as the craft of tie and dye is called, is a complex method of tying tiny areas of cloth with thread then dyeing it in progressive darker shades. In Gujarat, Jamnagar, Anjar and Bhuj are famous for their bandhini. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Saurashtra and Kutch all have their distinctive tie and dye styles. In Madurai in Tamil Nadu the craft is used for popular sari designing known as Sungudi. Rajasthan has a variation on the 'dot' design, laheriya – long lines or bands which run the length of the cloth. Inhabiting an otherwise stark desert landscape, the bandhini craftsmen draw on what they see most profusely around them – stars at night (represented by the dots in the bandhini) and sand dunes (the bands or 'waves' of the laheriya).

Hand printing is almost as universally popular in India as weaving. Printing is carried out under the following techniques – in the direct process, the block is pressed on the fabric and the desired impression made; in the resist-print, the areas to be kept in the background are coated with resistant substance like gum, clay, wax or resin. After the cloth has been dyed, the resist is removed and printing is carried out on portions of cloth which has retained the original colour.

For mordant, the madder or alizerin process, the cloth is processed with various substances so that when it is immersed in a dye bath, the reaction produces different colours.

In the indigo process, the cloth is washed in running water, then dried and block printed with a paste of clay, gum, jaggery – all used as resist; when com-



Farrukhabad hand printing

pleted the effect is like batik.

Rogan printing is done with a thick pigment of yellow colour and castor oil, heated and applied to produce encrusted patterns. Rajasthan has wide areas of handprinting. Barmer specialises in dark shades with geometrical patterns called ajrakh. Nathdwara prints are akin to Pichwais. Sandalwood blocks are used at times to leave a lingering fragrance on the cloth.

Chittorgarh prints are done on skirts and wraps as well as on floor coverings called jajams. Jaipur and Bagru prints are distinctive with a sophisticated use of delicate or muted colours. The jaribhat of Jaisalmer has an elaborate design of squares against a background of black, red and pink. Sanganer is a major hand-printing centre with characteristic delicate floral designs printed all over.

Gujarat is also known for its hand-prints. Ahmedabad and Baroda print lugdas (four yard saris) in traditional mango designs with heavily fluted lines on the pallu. Kutch is known for the print of its local satin, gajji, where the colours are black and red with motifs like peacocks, animals and flowers. The effect is almost like embroidery.

In Uttar Pradesh, Farrukhabad has the biggest hand-printing unit in India. It is a treasure-house of traditional designs ranging from butis (dots) to the famous 'tree of life.' Mango (paisley) design in various sizes are to be found too. The 'tree' is believed to be of Indo-Persian origin and has floral designs and calligraphy in it. In fact the printing is so complex that a single block is known to consist of 1,000 to 2,000 small designs.

Lucknow printing is influenced by its chikan work as well as by the Jamdani weave (See Handicraft: Woven Textiles). The Kalamkari of Masulipatnam is a mixture of painting and printing, using vegetable dyes.

The Malva region of Madhya Pradesh has a combination of rogan painting, tie and dye and resist painting. Some of the best prints are the nanana pieces (dark indigo skirts with a variety of designs) used by the local Bhil women (See People: Tribes).

In Bihar, hand printing is done on cotton, silk and wool. Bhagalpur, Bihar-sharif, Darbhanga, Saran and Patna are all known for printing work. Gaya, the pilgrimage city, has the feet and name of Buddha printed on textiles in red or ochre. The chunris (dupattas, See Adornment: Costumes) of Bihar have folk patterns on them. In a small sector in north

Bihar (Sursand) mica printing is carried out in bright colours of dots and stars. In Bengal, the Sirampur region specialises in large running designs in the Jamdani style. Amritsar in Punjab produces large handkerchiefs, wraps and stoles with block prints that resemble the Phulkari (See Embroidery). Pondicherry in the south uses mordant with either a brush or a block as an applicator for printing (See Adornment: Costumes).

CINEMA

HISTORY

India was the first Asian country to screen films within a year of the first ever film screening in Paris and less than three months after the first ticketed screening in America. On 7 July 1896, the Lumiere brothers, Louis and August, brought their 'Cinematographe' over from Paris and screened six short films at the Watson Hotel, Bombay.

The first Indian to shoot short films and a documentary was H.S. Bhatavadekar in 1899 and in 1901 respectively.

Thereafter, cinema gathered momentum in India with various silent narrative short films. A historical first was the full-length silent feature film, *Raja Harishchandra* by Dadasaheb Phalke (See Religion: Hinduism – Markandeya Purana). It earned him the sobriquet 'the Father of Indian Cinema' and the Indian Government instituted in 1969 the highest national award for cinema in his name.

The next big leap was on 14th March 1931, the release of India's first talkie *Alam Ara* in Hindustani by Ardeshir Irani of Bombay.

Madan Theatres of Calcutta made the first attempt at colour in 1932 and by 1950 colour was an established technical medium. Regional language films too were well under way and are now made in 32 languages and dialects. Technically, Indian cinema was quick on the uptake – it moved apace with the West from 35 to 70 mm and to cinemascope and even 3d.

Genre-wise, the 'typical' Indian film synthesised several existing cultural traditions: 19th century Parsi theatre that staged European-style melodramas; the Marathi 'Natya Sangeet' or musical play, usually on devotional, mythological and historical themes and the folk culture of various regions. The 30s and 40s saw 'social' themes urging family planning, widow remarriage and female literacy while campaigning against untouchability, child marriage, dowry and alcohol –



Kishore Kumar

a reflection of the vigorous winds of modernity sweeping India before and after Independence.

After the second World War, the great old studios declined. A commercial 'formula film' evolved, usually a tale of thwarted love (with a happy end) or a good-over-evil tale in the Indian theatre tradition. But always there were good films that drew on the richness of Indian literature.

From 1969 to the early eighties, a 'New Wave' of 'Parallel' cinema appeared, fuelled by the talented actors, directors, cinematographers and technicians graduating from the Indian Institute of Film Technology, Pune, who contributed much meaningful cinema. But the video boom of the 80s saw the closure of many movie halls and the entire industry slumped. It recouped again with slicker special effects, increasingly young, new stars, bolder, angrier scripts and more frenetic music. But always, a handful of 'new wave' films made an impact by avoiding or transcending the level of the formula. Today, touching 80 years, the cinema in India has become a multi-crore industry that offers the best of entertainment and the worst of escapism. But its popular hold and its powerful potential are evident especially in the distinct genre of film songs. Particularly the enduring classics of the 50s and 60s, which assimilated folk, semi-classical, jazz and pop to create wildly popular music that draws the most listeners on radio, the most viewers on television and notches the highest audio and video cassette sales.

Luminaries

ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN

Among the few regional filmmakers who have made the whole country sit up and take notice of regional language films. Winning four awards for his Malayalam film *Swayamvaram* in 1972, he continues with his singular experiments on screen.

AMITABH BACHCHAN

Referred to as the phenomenon of the 1970s and 80s, no other film star has grossed as much in box office hits. With his 'angry young man' arrived anti heroes and the 'revenge' motif created by script writers Salim-Javed. Notable films are *Deewar*, *Sholay*, *Don* and *Hum*.

DADA KONDKE

The Marathi filmmaker whose films were almost guaranteed hits. He had eight silver jubilees in succession. His double entendre themes and dialogues assured him a certain mass appeal and audience.

GURU DUTT

A film director far ahead of his times, he made 'offbeat' films like *Pyaasa* in the late 50s long before avant-garde films became a fad. Guru Dutt's last film *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959), released after the filmmaker's untimely death, was a pioneering effort in black and white cinemascope. Other memorable films are *Aar Paar*, *Baazi*, and *Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam*.

K.A. ABBAS

The well-known writer made films which also championed the cause of the underprivileged. He was the first filmmaker to

eschew studio sets altogether and shoot on location. His first experiment was with *Aasman Mahal* in 1965 made with the thespian Prithviraj Kapoor playing the principal role of an aristocrat pathetically holding on to his anachronistic lifestyle – a theme also explored by Satyajit Ray in *Jalsaghar*.

K.L. SAIGAL

Even today, decades after his death, K.L. Saigal is looked upon as the greatest singer – hero of the Hindi screen. His songs made him a legend in his own lifetime and his premature death only added to his mystique. His best remembered role is that of the tragic hero Devdas. Saigal is one of the few actors in India to have a screen biography dedicated to him, *Amar Saigal* (The immortal Saigal). It was a tribute by New Theatres, Calcutta to an actor who started his career with them and gave them his best years.

KAMALAHASAN

If Amitabh is the phenomenon of the Hindi screen, Kamal holds sway over the south Indian screen, particularly Tamil films. He has not hesitated to deglamorise himself for a role, be it that of a dolt in *Kalyanaraman* or a dwarf in *Apoorva Sahodarargal*. He has chalked up a record for the maximum number of awards for an actor.

KISHORE KUMAR

A versatile film personality, he acted, directed, produced, composed music, wrote lyrics, sang and also edited his films. He began as a comedian but later turned into a serious filmmaker-actor with films like *Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein*. He is best remembered as 'the man with the golden voice.' He excelled equally in songs like 'Ina mina dika' (a jazz - pop number) and the sonorous 'Zindagi ka safar.'

M. G. RAMACHANDRAN

The first of the screen heroes to effectively translate his celluloid popularity to politics and switch over from a swashbuckling 'Robin Hood' to chief ministership of Tamil Nadu. The next person to do so was N. T. Rama Rao of Andhra Pradesh. In his case it was a screen 'god' (of mythological films) metamorphosing into a political leader.

RAJ KAPOOR

The greatest showman of India for whom the largest screen was too small. From sensitive Chaplinesque films (of the small man caught up in a big bad society) like *Shree 420*, Raj Kapoor went on to make screen epics like *Sangam*, *Bobby*, *Prem Rog*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*. While all these films proved immensely popular at the box office, his

most sensitive film *Mera Naam Joker* failed at the time of its release in the late sixties. Today it is hailed as his best film.

SATYAJIT RAY

The film maker from Bengal who became a legend in his lifetime. Beginning with the Apu trilogy in the fifties (*Pather Panchali*, *Aparajito*, *Apur Sansar*), most of his films have been internationally hailed. He has also won over 30 international awards including a 1992 Oscar. The Indian Government awarded him the Bharat Ratna.

SHIVAJI GANESAN

A thespian of the Tamil screen who has been active for almost four decades and has acted in over 300 films, he is best known for his versatility and dialogue delivery. Perhaps no other Indian actor has equalled his capacity for non-stop rhetorical dialogue often running into 15 minutes on screen. In Tamil Nadu he is called 'Nadigar Tilagam' (gem among actors).

SUNILDUTT

An actor whose career on screen spawned three decades, he also made some experimental films. These included *Yaadein* (1964) the only film in India featuring just one actor on screen (himself). His *Mujhe Jeene Do* was one of the first attempts to view dacoits sympathetically and led the way to a number of like films that included the block buster *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* starring Raj Kapoor and Padmini.

V. SHANTARAM

Beginning his career with the film industry as an actor in 1921, Shantaram has played a vital role as a filmmaker for 65 continuous years. Though not as prolific as others Shantaram concentrated on 'art films' long before they became a theme for young directors in the sixties and seventies. His most notable musical offerings have been *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje*, *Naurang*, *Geet Gaya Pattharonen*, *Sehra* and *Do Aankhen Bara Haath*.

Marquee

ACTORS

Ashok Kumar was one of the first of the professional actors who began his career with the legendary studio 'Bombay Talkies' in 1936 and is still a strong presence on the Hindi screen. Dev Anand who along with his brothers Chetan and Vijay started the banner 'Nav Ketan,' is called the evergreen hero of the Hindi screen. There seems no retirement for this actor who continues to play conventional lead roles while his colleagues have graduated to grandfather roles. Although Dilip Kumar along with Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand formed the big trio

of the 1950s and 60s he was never as highly exposed on screen. The tragic hero, as he came to be known, has given some of his most memorable portrayals in *Devdas*, *Madhumati* and *Musafir*. He has proved his ability for comic and light roles in *Andaz*, *Kobinoor* and *Gopi*.

Balraj Sahni was a theatre person who came to be recognised as a screen actor after his brilliant portrayal of the small-time landowner risking his all to preserve his *Do Bigha Zamin* or two bighas of land (1953). Sahni continued to deliver outstanding performances till his last role in *Garm Hawa* in 1973.

For a long while Sanjeev Kumar languished as a peripheral actor. It took a series of films like *Koshish*, *Aandhi*, *Sita Aur Gita* and *Khilona* to prove he was one of the most gifted actors of the Hindi screen. His untimely death in 1985 cut short his illustrious career.

Uttam Kumar ruled the Bengali screen for years as a romantic hero, making sporadic ventures onto the Hindi screen. His best remembered performances are in Satyajit Ray's *Nayak*, *Harano Sur*, *Uttar Phalgun* and *Sagorika*. Uttam Kumar was replaced on the popularity charts by Soumitra Chatterji, a Satyajit Ray favourite. He has been cast in over ten Ray films which is a unique record in itself.

ACTRESSES

The talkies began with the singing stars Khurshid and Nurjehan who were the singing sensations of the 1940s till they emigrated to Pakistan and Suraiya reigned alone. With playback singing coming back into vogue Naseem, Begum Para, Rehana, Shobhana Samarth and Snehprabha became highly sought after stars. They were replaced in the 50s by Nargis, Nalini Jaywant, Madhubala, Kamani Kaushal and Geeta Bali.

The south had its own stars: Anjali Devi, Bhanumati, Savithri, B. Saroja Devi with Vijayantimala dividing her time equally between the north and south till she came to be exclusively associated with Hindi films.

Female lead roles in Bengal were played by Suchitra Sen, Sandhya Roy, Madhabi Mukherjee and Arundhati Devi.

The 1950s and 60s saw other gifted actresses on the screen. Meena Kumari, Nutan, Nimmi, Nargis, Waheeda Rehman, Sharmila Tagore, Mumtaz, Asha Parekh, Nanda and Mala Sinha were some of the popular stars. They were later replaced by Rekha and Sridevi.

'Parallel' cinema that started in 1969 with Suhasini Mulay in a film called *Bhuvan Shome* threw up its own stars,

especially in Hindi, Malayalam and Kannada. Shabana Azmi, the late Smita Patil, Sheela, Sri Vidya, Lakshmi, Suhasini and Shobha – who died tragically after a brilliant role in the award winning Tamil film *Pasi* (Hunger) – are some of the luminaries of this period that lasted till the video boom of the 1980s.

COMPOSERS

With music so integral to Indian films, music directors or composers assumed great importance. The 50s and 60s are looked upon as the golden age of film music. Each music director had his singular style and pioneering zeal. Shankar-Jaikishan were the first composing duo who introduced the thundering 100 piece orchestra and composed some of the finest tunes for R.K. Films like *Shree 420*, *Awara*, *Jagte Raho* and *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai*. Naushad concentrated on classical tunes with enduring scores for films like *Baiju Bawra*, *Mahal* and *Shabab*.

Madan Mohan was the premier Ghazal composer.

C. Ramachandra brought the western beat to Indian films but alongside he composed soulful music in films like *Anarkali*. To him also goes the credit of setting to tune *Ai mere watan ke logon* – a tribute Lata Mangeshkar paid to the Indian soldiers who lost their lives during the Chinese aggression of 1962. S. D. Burman was a versatile composer, as much at home with classical tunes as with 'Indian pop'. It is thus difficult to reconcile the composer of *Haal kaisa hai janab ka* (*Chalti Ka Naam Gadi*) with *Jalte hain jiske liye* (*Sujata*). Burman introduced the folk music element by adopting the 'bhattali' (Bengal fisherfolk songs) to film music.



Lata Mangeshkar



Shivaji Ganesan

Salil Choudhury infused Mozart with Bengali folk tunes and composed such memorable songs as *Aaja re pardesi* (*Madhumati*) and *O maine tere liye hi saat rang ke* (*Anand*).

To the Kalyanji-Anandji brothers goes the credit of introducing the maximum number of new voices in the field of playback singing.

PARALLEL CINEMA

The 'new wave' in cinema threw up a number of young filmmakers in the early 1970s. Shyam Benegal made a big impact with his *Ankur* and followed it up with *Nisbaant* and other films. Many other creative directors came to the fore – Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani, Govind Nihalani, Sai Paranjpye and Vijaya Mehta. From Kerala Aravindan and John Abraham and Adoor Gopalakrishnan brought a fresh wave of creativity to the screen. In Bengal actress Aparna Sen's first film *36 Chouringhee Lane* earned for her a place with the great directors. Then came *Parama*. Girish Karnad made his *Vamsa Vriksha*, Prema Karanth her hard hitting *Phaniamma* – a biographical account of the atrocities heaped on a virgin widow. While these were the new crop of directors from established film centres, Kalpana Lajmi took to Assam and the tea estates for a backdrop for her bold film *Ek Pal*.

PLAYBACK SINGERS

Music has contributed greatly to the success of films and the role of playback singers in Indian cinema therefore is unparal-

leled anywhere else in the world. Mohammed Rafi, Talat Mehmood, Mukesh, Manna Dey, Hemant Kumar and Kishore Kumar are the names of note. Each one of these singers had a definite slot in the background score that was composed for films. Rafi and Kishore were versatile, while Mukesh's voice was most suited to certain actors like Raj Kapoor. Manna Dey was the classical and semi-classical specialist, while Talat sang melodious Ghazals.

Lata Mangeshkar and her sister Asha Bhonsle have dominated the field since the fifties. Geeta Dutt (who died young), Suman Kalyanpur, Sudha Malhotra and Shamshad Begum were other popular playback singers.

RAJSHRI PICTURES

Founded by Tarachand Barjatya, with the largest network of cinema halls and distribution centres in India, the production house has contributed greatly towards introducing new faces on screen and making small budget but highly popular films. *Dosti* was one of their first successful films followed by *Geet Gata Chal*, *Tapasya* and the record hit *Maine Pyar Kiya*.

RAMSAY BROTHERS

Known for specialising in horror films, each one of the seven brothers look after a different aspect of filmmaking and their films have predictable names like *Purani Haveli*, *Purana Mandir* (Old mansion, Old temple) and soon.

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